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FIRST THINGS

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WILLIAM J. ABRAHAM

MUST THE TRUTH OFFEND?
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ALSO: The Extraordinary Politics of Alien Citizens • James Nuechterlein on Sports
Preston Jones on the Evangelical Mind • Michael Linton on George Rochberg
Gary Hardaway • Kenneth Craycraft • Bill Coyle • Paul Hollander • Brian C. Anderson

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RICHARD JOHN NEUHAUS
THE PUBLIC SQUARE
A CONTINUING SURVEY OF RELIGION AND PUBLIC LIFE

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FIRST THINGS

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Church and World

That Robert Benne wonders ("The Neo-Augustinian Temptation," March) why Stanley Hauerwas and friends write so glowingly about "ecclesial realities" is likely due to Mr. Benne's deficient grasp of ecclesiology, which he characterizes as "that formerly unexciting branch of systematic theology." To speak glowingly about the Church apparently means for Mr. Benne to believe that the Church is composed of "shining knights in the Kingdom of God" rather than "bands of forgiven sinners." Mr. Benne must have neglected his lessons in church history, as he seems unaware that the catholic tradition of ecclesiology, which is quite enthusiastic about ecclesial life, has always resisted the elitism prominent in schismatic renderings of the Church. Augustine's writings against the Donatists and Pelagians helped to cement in the West a vision of the Church in which sinners in need of ongoing repair are welcomed, and the trajectories of Augustinian ecclesiology continue to challenge all forms of sectarianism. . . .

As a Protestant who was eventually introduced to a more liturgical form of ecclesial life, I can inform Mr. Benne as to why some Christians are enthusiastic about ecclesiology. In both biblical and traditional catholic terms, the Church is the social matrix wherein redeemed sinners regularly encounter the riches of God's unconditional love and are formed to share that love with their neighbors. The principal means of this encounter is the liturgy, in which the great events of salvation history are dramatized and celebrated. If we are to believe St. Paul, our continuing participation in this drama reinforces our communal identity as pilgrims en route to our true homeland, an identity difficult to maintain as life's manifold pressures accumulate but necessary to nurture if we wish to bring every thought into captivity and obedience to Christ. An ecclesial life characterized by communal repentance and renewal may not excite the managers of mega-churches and their clients, or anyone else suspicious of traditional church trappings, but it is hardly the suffocating and stultifying experience Mr. Benne fears. . . .

A genuine ecclesial life is in fact the sine qua non of the very thing Mr. Benne thinks missing from neo-Augustinian ecclesiology, the impulse to provide a comprehensive Christian witness to the world. As Robert Jenson has noted, if the Church is to be "relevant" in today's world, it must not naively believe that the "real action" is in the world, while what happens "in church" is merely preparation for working in that world (a judgment implicit in Mr. Benne's piece). Instead, for the Church to make a difference outside its own walls, it must continue to rehearse in its corporate life the promises made by the God who calls this Church into existence and sustains it by his Word and Spirit. Only a people humbled and empowered through participation in such an ecclesial life can witness in and struggle for the world.

Anthony DiStefano
Mesa, AZ

Beyond thanking him for the company in which he puts me, it is a little difficult to respond to Robert Benne, since he provides nothing that could be called an argument. Instead, after granting the force of much of what the rather diverse group he calls "Neo-Augustinians" has been saying, he goes on to suggest oh-so-condescendingly that we are really loopy sectarian romantics after all. He does so by setting forth a series of truisms as though they were counterpositions to Hays, Hütter, Milbank, Wright, Yeago, et al., though he has in fact done nothing to show that any of us disagree with any of them.

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For example: "If God is indeed the creator and sustainer of the larger world of economics, politics, and culture, then we as Christians are called to witness there." So long as "creator and sustainer" does not (as I rather fear) exclude "judge" I would more or less agree, but the question is what constitutes *competence* to witness. My worry is that the ecclesial life of mainline churches lacks sufficient density to form us into competent witnesses; Professor Benne apparently thinks this a wild and irresponsible thought that respectable people will refuse to entertain.

Or again: "And though we know that much of contemporary culture is debased, we also know that it is not beyond redemption." None of the theologians to whom Mr. Benne refers has ever, to my knowledge, based any argument on a claim that contemporary culture is "beyond redemption"—whatever that means. The issue once again is formation and discernment. I believe that being drenched in the Psalms made Aquinas a *better* interpreter of Aristotle, and likewise that if mainline churches had their own vigorous scriptural and liturgical culture, our engagement with the culture around us would be *more* interesting and vital, not less.

Mr. Benne goes on: "There is still much that is good—given and sustained by the Creator—in our common life outside the Church." Indeed: and if our common life *inside* the Church helped us more to share the mind of Christ, we might be able to recognize that good when we saw it.

So far as one can tell from so insubstantial a polemic, the problem seems to be that Prof. Benne assumes that spiritual discernment and moral judgment are basically *easy*. He apparently just *knows* what we are to do out there, what our witness in the world is supposed to be, what groups we should ally ourselves with; separating the good from the bad in contemporary culture is not a great puzzle to him. This is rooted in his assumption of the normativity and inevitability of the way things are: that either our lives or our churches might someday be quite different from what they are now, or that the mind and assumptions of nice middle-class Mainline Protestant People Like Us might not be an adequate Christian norm, seem to him dangerous and unhealthy thoughts.

Meanwhile many of the most serious and thoughtful young adults in churches like mine and his are leaving for evangelicalism, for Rome, for Orthodoxy, where what Prof. Benne derides as romantic fantasy is available as concrete reality: neither communal perfection nor the end of strife but, yes, the incorporation of "full persons into a full ecclesial culture that can overcome the terrible fragmentation of modern life."

Many leave not because they want to renounce engagement with the world but because mainline churches give them no place to stand in their engagement. They leave because they are persuaded that there ought to be some profound wisdom in the gospel yet are given only platitudes. They leave because they suspect that all the self-righteous talk of engagement and witness is only fronting for a deep and torpid conformism that sees a "debased" culture as still "not all that bad." (And once rooted in the "parallel ecclesial cultures" of whose inbred quietism Mr. Benne is so convinced, they go on to found, staff, and sustain the groups he points to as models for Christian engagement!)

What is finally saddest about Mr. Benne's piece is its resounding irrelevance. He seems to be fighting the emotional battles of thirty or forty years ago, struggling for freedom from a stifling pietism. The restoration of that pietism seems to be all he can imagine when anyone says "ecclesial culture," though in fact it was stifling largely because it was built on the split between private religion and the public world that "Neo-Augustinians" have been criticizing.

In the meantime, instead of dealing straightforwardly and concretely with what people are actually proposing and envisioning, Mr. Benne raises a cloud of rhetorical smoke about "suffocating and stultifying" ecclesial life, the only possible effect of which will be to hamper the concrete catechetical, liturgical, and disciplinary reforms that might yet open mainline churches to renewal and give them a future as communities of distinctive witness and life.

David S. Yeago
Lutheran Theological
Southern Seminary
Columbia, SC

Robert Benne replies:

I find Anthony DiStefano's eloquent description of ecclesial life very persuasive and have little to say in disagreement. My critical point was that such ecclesial life, no matter how rich, is not all we live in. To insist that it is seems "stultifying" to me. My point was that such ecclesial life cannot be the sole reality in which we live or out of which we attempt to renew society.

As to David S. Yeago's blustery response . . . I always thought it an axiom that the best conversations went on among friendly critics, but it seems that for Mr. Yeago a friendly critic is an oxymoron. Moreover, if the points of my little article are so "insubstantial" and "irrelevant," then why all the unseemly rage? I thought I was being basically complimentary. But I did demur from what I thought is an unduly "church-centric" approach that does not care enough for the secular world as an arena of mission in our daily callings, and that seems too closed to the "world" as a source for building up a more wholesome common life.

But Nobody Does Anything About It

Jonathan Carson's "The Second Time as Farce: Galileo Redux" (March) shows how the spiritual hubris implicit in current secularist thinking about weather and climate is betrayed in the speech of political leaders on the subject. The matter has a deeply theological root, which Mr. Carson has exposed; he also rightly argues on scientific grounds

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that the weather, as a classic case of chaotic dynamic behavior, is hardly subject to systematic "background" *control* in the fashion tacitly presumed in much current talk about global warming and its possible prevention.

Yet I think that in spite of the knowledge that Mr. Carson displays to illustrate his point, he has misled his readers in the long run by suggesting that there is a clear scientific basis for believing that we cannot *affect* climate. . . .

Mr. Carson's scientific statements about chaotic behavior deal mostly (and quite correctly) with the unpredictability and irregularity inherent in a particular chaotic trajectory. He has not really addressed the fact that the notion of *climate,* as distinct from the notion of *weather,* is not concerned with particular features of a single trajectory or history, but with the fact that there are some general features about certain kinds of time and system *averages* over many trajectories—and that these average features tend to show certain kinds of regularity or slow secular variation that are not apparent in a single trajectory (the term *secular* here has a technical meaning, not the common one of "not religious").

Whether or not Mr. Gore understands the difference between the notions of climate and weather, it is important that we not obscure it by too facile generalizations about chaotic and irregular behavior. Mr. Carson has suggested in his more discursive and less technical paragraphs that "variability" and "change" are so endemic to all such systems that the very notion of a "background" or secular change in such a system is inherently specious. This seems to me to be misleading and ultimately untrue in a practical sense.

Mr. Carson is of course quite right in implying that if we ask whether even local or limited time averages in a system with chaotic trajectories are themselves completely ordered and regular, we find that they are not, and that over even greater times they, like individual trajectories themselves, are unpredictable; that is probably an essential aspect of chaotic behavior. Yet in practical terms such limited or local average behaviors *do* exhibit approximately regular and usefully predictable elements. The common distinction we make between the notions of climate and weather rests on that obvious truth in respect to the weather as a chaotic dynamic system.

Mr. Carson points out that the term "chaos *theory*" is a misnomer because it is based on a mathematically demonstrable set of conclusions regarding certain kinds of determinate but complex physical systems. But the more important misnomer to which physicists commonly draw attention in the term is that the theory, as a theory with further useful conclusions, is not a theory about *chaos* but about the kinds of definite relations that can exist between forms of disorder and still higher forms of order. To draw the discursive conclusions Mr. Carson seems to leave us with is something akin to the way in which popular discussions of the theory of *relativity* used to suggest that it justified *relativism* in philosophical and moral thinking. . . . The fact is that most chaotic motion is not, on limited average, utterly unlike regular or nearly regular behavior, and while this qualitative judgment is very difficult if not impossible to make into mathematically rigorous conclusions, its practical value as a perception is an important starting point for constructive results in the theory. Hence also, while we scoff at the weatherman in detail, we do listen to him in general.

It is also a fact that if one imposes a small perturbation of some kind in a chaotic dynamic system, its effects on the details of a particular trajectory will not be predictable; but its effects on the *averaged* behavior of both regular and chaotic trajectories will be *more* predictable, evident, and broadly understandable in terms of notions of stress and response. Given this simple fact, I cannot see how Mr. Carson can argue so categorically that we ought *not* think that (a) global warming is occurring, and (b) that if it is occurring our current behavior is not partly responsible for it. I am not prepared to attribute the excesses of "El Nino" this winter to "global warming" as some wild-eyed radicals do. I am not sure that the evidence for global warming is totally convincing or that its connection to our production of greenhouse gases, deforestation, or other forms of pollution of our world is firmly demonstrable. But it is suggestive enough to be sobering, and to make arguments that our actions do not affect, or cannot be shown to affect, the climate, seems rather irresponsible. . . .

Walter R. Thorson
Kootenia, ID

Jonathan Carson's wide-ranging and pithy essay on Al Gore's environmental looniness left me a bit confused about where Mr. Carson thinks the real problem lies. He describes two groups: the New Age types for whom Gore's *Earth in the Balance* is tantamount to holy writ, and Christians for whom the Bible's story of the Fall and Redemption is the ultimate explanation of the human condition. Although he refers in passing to scientific theories and results, he gives short shrift to those who, it seems to me, currently hold the winning hand in the environmental poker game we are playing with the world economy as chips. These are the scientists themselves, who have convinced nearly everyone in power that they can really tell what is going to happen to the globe's climate.

Few if any scientists believe in the childish vengeful-goddess myths that would blame the eruption of a Mount St. Helens on environmental depredation by multinational corporations. But many of them do believe that in burning fossil fuels, man is conducting a long-term experiment with the earth's climate that really should not be tried. This tendency of thought was revealed vividly a couple of years ago when I attended a public lecture by an esteemed faculty member of my university's Department of Geosciences. His topic was global warming, and he spent the better part of an hour describing the rich and varied

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record of climatic changes over thousands of years that are revealed by polar ice-core-sample research. After his talk he took questions, most of which bore on the technical aspects of his remarks. But when my turn came, I asked him, "If you became world energy czar tomorrow, what would your energy policy be?"

This cool, objective, impartial scientist's reply? "First, I'd fire the Pope!" In other words, the best solution to the problem of global warming was not wise use of available energy, or the development of alternatives, but a reduction in the number of people, since it was those pesky humans who were lousing up the environment in the first place, and anyone who recommended policies to increase the multiplication of such an undesirable species was obviously off his nut. . . .

As much recent work in the sociology of science has shown, scientists are not always the calmly objective followers of truth wherever it may lead, an image they carefully cultivate in public forums. They are as swayed by political winds and funding shifts as members of any other profession. We can hope and pray that the current trendy environmentalism will yield in the future to something more reasonable in the Aristotelian sense of "reason," which includes wisdom and common sense as well as what passes for modern science.

Karl D. Stephan
Amherst, MA

Jonathan Carson replies:

Walter R. Thorson says that I have "misled" readers "by suggesting that there is a clear scientific basis for believing that we cannot affect climate." I am "rather irresponsible" for making "arguments that our actions do not affect, or cannot be shown to affect, the climate." In fact, I was careful not to say that we have no effect on weather and climate. I even stated explicitly that we "do affect the weather." My complaint is with those who say that they know *the nature and magnitude of the* myriad of effects we have on the weather. I worried, for instance, about voters who "believe that the weather depends in some large and predictable way upon how they vote," not about voters who think that their votes have some effect on the weather.

Mr. Thorson makes the serious charge that I draw my conclusions in "something akin to the way in which popular discussions of the theory of relativity used to suggest that it justified relativism in philosophical and moral thinking." But that mistake consisted of taking a conclusion from one realm (science) and applying it uncritically to another (philosophy), while my use of chaos theory is confined to the scientific realm for which it was designed.

Karl D. Stephan has accurately described scientists who promote global warming hysteria. The problem is that a secular society does not meet the demands of our fallen human nature. Man is a religious animal. Religion means sacrifice. So secular society is driven by transmuted religious impulses, transmuted sacrificial behaviors, one of which is fear of global warming. Scientists are no more immune from this imperative than anyone else. They zealously guard science against Christianity and are taken unawares by the New Age.

The Irony of Realism

Andrew J. Bacevich's "The Irony of American Power" (March) is very instructive about the United States' foreign policy both past and present. The critique of neoliberals and neoconservatives helps put today's foreign policy debates in a framework that provides useful insight.

However, I hope his preferred alternative does "not exhaust the range of possibilities available to the United States." Realism seems to substitute "no vision" for "flawed vision." As Mr. Bacevich aptly points out, realism "does not provide a formula for policy prescription." . . .

Realism may prove useful to insure that U.S. commitments do not exceed its finite power, but I fail to ascertain from Mr. Bacevich's description how it provides any clue as to what the goal of U.S. policy should be. An "approximate peace" is the closest description of any vision that Mr. Bacevich provides. How does the application of realism move us in that direction? Neoliberalism envisions a path through "continuous economic growth," while the neoconservative's path marker is "ideological expansion." . . .

"Sound policy" is a meaningless term until attached to a goal. Mr. Bacevich would have supplied a more useful conclusion if he had recommended an alternative that included a discernible vision.

Bruce Klimak
Ogden Dunes, IN

Necessary Neutrality

Richard John Neuhaus disparages Douglas Laycock's view that government should be religiously neutral (While We're At It, March). But if government is not neutral, then it favors one or some religions or religious positions over others. Thus, if a government may deny women the right to end problem pregnancies, it may as easily deny women the right to continue pregnancies the government may not approve of; or the government that provides tax aid to Catholic private schools could hardly refuse to provide similar aid to fundamentalist schools that derogate Catholicism and Episcopalianism (as Albert Menendez documented in his 1993 book *Visions of Reality: What Fundamentalist Schools Teach*).

Democratic principle, religious pluralism, and fairness demand government neutrality toward religion. Luckily, our Constitution requires it.

Edd Doerr
Executive Director
Americans for Religious Liberty
Kansas City, MO

In Defense of Lutheran Ecumenism

Some things were obscured by Richard John Neuhaus' critique ("Here I Stand. And Here, and Here: The ELCA in Assembly," Public Square, December 1997) of the 1997

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ecumenical decisions by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). Or so it seems to this evangelical catholic participant in one of the dialogues that produced the ecumenical proposals.

1. Church doctrine is defined by corporate texts and traditions, not by anecdotes. Father Neuhaus reminded us of this (at a 1995 St. Olaf conference) when protesting a newspaper survey that showed many Roman Catholic parishioners to be closet Zwinglians—seeing the Eucharist as "memorial" rather than Real Presence. He forgot this good point about the locus of church identity in his judgment of the Episcopal Church and United Church of Christ by the theological vacuity of some of their clergy rather than by their historic texts and traditions. On current doctrinal emptiness in our churches, we are all in the same boat, Fr. Neuhaus included, and there is no safe ecclesiastical harbor.

Among the important countertrends to ideological fancies is the return to doctrinal First Things in all of the ecumenical proposals the ELCA considered. In fact, at key points their stated premises are not unlike the affirmations of the recent "Gift of Salvation" statement of "Evangelicals and Catholics Together" that Fr. Neuhaus helped to fashion. . . .

2. All three proposals work with a common presupposition, identified in the Lutheran-Reformed document as "mutual affirmation and mutual admonition." Harding Myer, a leading Lutheran ecumenist, calls this an ecumenical breakthrough. Far from the theological indifferentism Fr. Neuhaus finds as explanation for the approval or near-approval of all three proposals, this kind of ecumenical negotiation requires each church not only to discern the convergences noted above, but also to honor the divergences: to admonish the other about the validity of its own "accent" or "emphasis," and to open its own ears to the same kind of admonition. This tough-mindedness about historical differences acknowledges the need of each church body for a "corrective" to its reductionist temptations. Paul's word to a fragmented Corinthian congregation (1 Corinthians 12) is just this kind of counsel. And what tradition in the present broken state of the Body of Christ does not need to be so admonished?

3. The appreciative citation of Mercersburg theology is welcome. John Nevin and Philip Schaff were the first to give currency in North America to "evangelical Catholicism," and are influential ancestors of my own "insouciant" United Church of Christ. But contrary to Fr. Neuhaus' dismissal of Reformed eucharistic theology, their careful research demonstrated its commitment to the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist. Of course, there is a long-time Lutheran-Reformed debate on the mode of that Presence: the Lutheran concept of "ubiquity" vs. the Reformed view of the work of the Holy Spirit making present the glorified humanity of Christ. As noted by Robert Jenson, the international Reformed-Roman Catholic Dialogue, on just this point, "achieved an extensive common doctrine of Christ's presence," albeit, interestingly, with a "polite shared opposition to Lutheran innovations."

Mutual admonition and the quest for complementarity are a better way than either "polite . . . opposition" or church-dividing declamations based on careless theological judgments. We are all in debt to the ELCA for its theological seriousness in showing us this better way toward St. Paul's catholic vision.

Gabriel Fackre
Andover Newton Theological School
Newton Centre, MA

Living in the Last Days

Thank you for Avery Dulles' illuminating article on tradition and liturgy ("The Ways We Worship," March). He said, however, that tradition "points forward to the Eschaton." One wishes he had used "the Eschaton" (the last age) in its fuller biblical meaning instead of the restricted meaning of the Second Coming and its aftermath. St. Paul and other New Testament authors have this final age *already beginning* at Christ's death and resurrection and continuing on to its perfection at his Second Coming.

The early Christians are said to be living "at the ends of the ages" (1 Corinthians 10:11), the end of the age of the Mosaic Law and the beginning of the new Christian eschatological age, the Eschaton. Christ came the first time "at the end of the ages" (Hebrews 9:26) or "at the end of the times" (1 Peter 1:20). But the new last age has already begun (Romans 3:21), called the "later times" (1 Timothy 4:1) or "the last hour" (1 John 2:18). "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come" (2 Corinthians 5:17). Among the many manifestations of this new age, this as yet imperfectly present Eschaton, is the church's liturgy, aptly characterized by the Second Vatican Council as offering a foretaste of the liturgy of heaven.

(The Rev.) Jerome F. Treacy, S.J.
Clarkston, MI

Avery Dulles replies:

I see no real difference between my position and that of Father Treacy. That the Eschaton is not a *merely* future reality should be clear from my statement that "tradition communicates the Holy Spirit, who is the eschatological gift." While acknowledging that the Eschaton is "imperfectly present" here and now, Fr. Treacy and I both wish to keep the tension toward the as-yet-unrealized future. As the Church sings in its antiphon for Vespers at the Feast of Corpus Christi, the Eucharist is "a pledge of future glory." The promised fullness is a key element in Christian eschatology.

Correcting the Record

It is unfortunate that George Hunston Williams' superb book, *The Mind of John Paul II*, receives mention in the pages of FIRST THINGS only, it seems, to be the victim of a misattribution ("Absolutely Free," Public Square, March).

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Richard John Neuhaus reports that, according to the translators of a new book by Rocco Buttiglione, Williams' book contains the suggestion that "because Wojtyla was a Pole writing under a totalitarian regime, he did not understand the American mind and the principles of the free society." That remark would unfairly group Williams' excellent and reliable book with a large number of bad books on the Pope.

In fact, Williams asserts the opposite. An eminent historian of Slavic Christianity, Williams correctly notes that Wojtyla's Polish inheritance gave him an appreciation of civil liberties, e.g., "Our second emerging motif is the long tradition of civil liberty in Poland and the indisposition on the part of Poles to use coercion in the realm of conscience." And he regards Wojtyla's long experience with totalitarianism as a training ground in the appreciation of republicanism, observing in this regard that "no Pontiff in modern times has ever come to the See of Peter with greater personal devotion to the principles of civil liberties as the natural and revealed rights of man than has John Paul II."

The translators of Buttiglione, it seems, are sloppy in their philosophizing as well as in their scholarship. They claim, quite incredibly, that Wojtyla "values freedom more than truth, and is ready to subordinate the rights of truth to freedom"; but this is not relativism, which is "the dismissal of truth." But if Wojtyla had held that view—and I am not acquainted with any evidence or sound arguments that he did—he would then be at odds, not only with the entire Catholic philosophical tradition, but also with his own *Veritatis Splendor*, which quite explicitly states that freedom should be subordinated to truth and that the contrary view amounts to relativism.

Williams' book on the thought of John Paul II, published in 1981, has proved astonishingly prescient in its predictions of what a Wojtyla pontificate would be like. . . . Perhaps Buttiglione's book will surpass it, but I suspect that this would be in spite of, not by the help of, the efforts of his English translators.

Michael Pakaluk
Department of Philosophy
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Worcester, MA

A Different Gospel?

In "Ungenuine and Gratuitous" (Public Square, March), Richard John Neuhaus takes "some Baptists" to task for their criticism of the Evangelical-Catholic "Gift of Salvation" statement, which seeks to articulate a doctrine of justification by faith that is acceptable to both parties. Father Neuhaus charges that "these critics [assume] that baptismal regeneration is incompatible with justification by faith. . . . [They are] prejudging the question before engaging it." According to Fr. Neuhaus, "Some Baptist opponents of 'The Gift of Salvation' would seem to be elevating baptismal regeneration to the status of the doctrine by which the church stands or falls, in which case one might suggest that Baptists are decidedly outside the Great Tradition of Christian orthodoxy . . . [and] such an elevation would quite thoroughly shatter the community that is today called evangelical Protestantism." . . .

I cannot presume to speak for the Baptist critics (indeed, I am not a Baptist myself), but I suspect my objections to "The Gift of Salvation" are similar to theirs (which, if Fr. Neuhaus' presentation of them is fair, may have been clumsily expressed), so I shall endeavor to clarify why it is that we do not accept this statement.

Evangelicals believe that salvation is by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. This means that the requirement for salvation is belief plus nothing else. There are too many statements in the Bible affirming that those who believe are saved (including, of course, John 3:16, which is cited as the preface to "The Gift of Salvation") for us to say that something other than belief is necessary for salvation. Furthermore, we believe that adding any other requirement for salvation is to depart from the Gospel. . . .

What does the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) say about the requirements for salvation? CCC 1129 says, "The Church affirms that for believers the sacraments of the New Covenant are *necessary for salvation*" (emphasis in original). CCC 1257 says, "Baptism is necessary for salvation for those to whom the Gospel has been proclaimed and who have had the possibility of asking for this sacrament." These are only two of many examples, but they are more than enough to show that the Roman Catholic Church does indeed add requirements, beyond simple faith, for salvation. Thus, by the Protestant understanding, Rome preaches a different gospel, which is no gospel at all. . . .

There is *one* point about which Fr. Neuhaus is correct. He writes, "If believable affirmation of the heart of the Gospel requires the Catholic repudiation of doctrines that Baptists think incompatible with the heart of the Gospel, there is obviously no point to further theological conversation." We do believe that affirmation of the heart of the Gospel does require the Catholic repudiation of doctrines that are incompatible with the heart of the Gospel. Until and unless that happens, the Protestant Gospel and the Catholic gospel remain quintessentially different and irreconcilable, and conversation for the purpose of reconciling them is indeed pointless.

Finally, we do not maintain that the Catholic signatories "are not genuine Catholics, are dishonest, or are just plain dumb." Rather, it is the Evangelical signatories (presumably in their haste to make common cause with the Catholic Church in the "culture wars") who have been theologically careless and remiss. Very remiss, indeed.

John Tors
Toronto, Ontario

The Biblical Gospel

Since its publication, "The Gift of Salvation" (FIRST THINGS, January), of which we along with other Evangelical and Roman Catholic theolo-

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gians were signatories, has garnered much attention on both sides of this historic confessional divide. We are eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace lest the Body of Christ be further fractured through careless conduct or willful disregard on our part. We are thus pleased to respond to various comments and questions concerning the purpose and intended meaning of "The Gift of Salvation."

"The Gift of Salvation" is not an official accord between the Roman Catholic Church and any evangelical church or denomination. It is a good-faith effort on the part of some Roman Catholics and some Evangelicals to say, with as much clarity as possible, how they understand God's gracious gift of salvation on the basis of the Word of God. We Evangelicals who signed "The Gift of Salvation" do not claim a unity of faith with the Church of Rome. What we do acknowledge is a unity in Christ with Roman Catholic believers who, no less than we ourselves, have been saved by God's grace and justified by faith alone. Despite our doctrinal differences, we who by faith know, love, trust, and hope in Christ the Mediator are brothers and sisters in the Lord.

We believe that "The Gift of Salvation" is a significant first step in the right direction, but we do not claim that we have reached a complete common agreement on the doctrine of salvation as expressed in the official teachings of our respective communities. As Timothy George wrote in his introduction to "The Gift of Salvation" in the December 1997 issue of *Christianity Today*: "We rejoice that our Roman Catholic interlocutors have been able to agree with us that the doctrine of justification set forth in this document agrees with what the Reformers meant by justification by faith alone (*sola fide*). . . . [But] this still does not resolve all the differences between our two traditions on this crucial matter."

Likewise Cardinal Edward Cassidy declared: "This does not mean that Evangelicals and Catholics have overcome all their doctrinal differences or that their understanding of the Gospel and of the Christian message has suddenly become identical. We will surely continue to evangelize according to our beliefs." Yet what we have affirmed together in this document, we believe, is of fundamental importance.

When "The Gift of Salvation" speaks of "needlessly divisive disputes" between Roman Catholics and Evangelicals, it does not refer to the many weighty theological matters on which we still conscientiously disagree, such as sacramental theology, Marian devotion, purgatory, etc. "The Gift of Salvation" takes note of these matters, referring to them as "serious and persistent differences" which are "necessarily interrelated" with the affirmations we have made in common, and are thus future agenda items for us. The fact that these issues are "on the table" does not mean that they are "up for grabs," but rather that they must be pursued with rigor and honesty in our continuing dialogue. By "needlessly divisive disputes" we mean the kind of mutual recrimination and uncharitable taunting which has resulted in Protestant-bashing and Catholic-baiting in the past and which still persists today.

Our methodology in crafting "The Gift of Salvation" was to study the Bible together and to formulate a statement on salvation derived from and based upon the evidence of Holy Scripture alone. In doing so we were in line with the historic Evangelical insistence on the sufficiency of Scripture and the recent Roman Catholic renaissance in biblical studies.

Based on our common study of the Bible, we were able to agree that the work of redemption has been accomplished (a word which means done, completed) by Christ's atoning sacrifice on the cross. "The Gift of Salvation" affirms a declaratory, forensic justification on the sole ground of the righteousness of Christ alone, a standing before God not earned by any good works or merits of our own. It states that in justification, here and now, God graciously constitutes us his forgiven friends and that is how henceforth we stand in relation to him. In these terms, we intended to affirm nothing less than "justification by grace alone because of Christ alone through faith alone," which is the biblical Gospel.

The word *imputation* (not used in the body of the document) refers to God's crediting of righteousness to us because of what Christ has done for us: which means, God's accounting of Christ's righteousness to all those who are united with him

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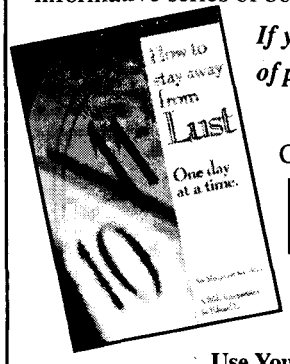

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through faith. As Evangelicals, we saw this teaching as implicit in the doctrine of justification by faith alone and tried to express it in biblical terms. Our discussion was also informed by the superb biblical scholarship of Father Joseph Fitzmyer, whose recent *Commentary on Romans* illuminates the Pauline meaning of justification:

> When, then, Paul in Romans says that Christ Jesus "justified" human beings "by his blood" (3:25; cf. 5:9), he means that by what Christ suffered in his passion and death he has brought it about that sinful human beings can stand before God's tribunal acquitted or innocent, with the judgment not based on observance of the Mosaic Law. . . . Paul insists on the utter gratuity of this justification because "all alike have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (3:23). Consequently, this uprightness does not belong to human beings (10:3), and it is not something that they have produced or merited; it is an alien uprightness, one belonging rightly to another (to Christ) and attributed to them because of what that other has done for them. So Paul understands God "justifying the godless" (4:5) or "crediting uprightness" to human beings quite "apart from deeds."

As we have said before, we do not seek Christian unity at the expense of Christian truth. We are engaged in an ecumenism of conviction, not an ecumenism of accommodation. That commitment to unity in truth alone is held with equal firmness by both the Evangelical and Roman Catholic theologians in this ongoing process. We see our statement as expressing, not indeed unity in every aspect of the Gospel but unity in its basic dimension, with hope of that unity being extended through further discussion.

In the sixteenth century, Calvin, Bucer, and Melanchthon, among others, met with Roman Catholic theologians to discuss the central doctrines of the Reformation. We, with them, stand in that same tradition, committed to the principle of *ecclesia semper reformanda* (the church always reforming). We believe that both doctrinal reformation and Christian unity flow from the gracious work of the Holy Spirit. For this we pray and beg the prayers of all God's people.

Timothy George
Thomas C. Oden
J. I. Packer

A Tale of Two Cities

It might be best for Richard John Neuhaus to spend some time in New Orleans before decrying its "suicide" (While We're At It, March). And I don't mean on a whirlwind tour of a talk here and a talk there and then a flight out of town as his type has been known to do. I'm talking a leisurely week or so in the Crescent city to pray with its people, speak its language, walk its streets, eat its food.

He might find it a bit safer than the rumors he's heard may have it. You see, we've borrowed some good ideas and some bad ones from the Big Apple—law enforcement tactics is one of the good ones. Another would be refusing to accept silly observations: how many black children does Father Neuhaus think are numb enough not to care about studying in a school named after the Confederacy's sole president (or some of its generals)? I wouldn't call this "ideological rectification of history." I'd call it overcoming the ramifications of sin through the grace of God in our hearts. . . .

Hasn't the Big Apple gone through some of its own name changes in its history? If we always refused change simply for its own sake, your magazine would be issued from New Amsterdam. Sometimes changes come about as a result of opened eyes. . . .

Can you walk down Elysian Fields in your city? Can you take a shaded stroll down St. Charles Avenue? Eat at Galatiore's or Antoine's on Bourbon Street? Do you have a Pirates' Alley? In your street address I see only the sterile "156 Fifth Avenue."

And please, let's remember that Walker Percy's setting for *Love in the Ruins* was not New Orleans. It was decaying suburbia where, as Percy says, a malaise had taken over—the inspiration of this setting being not far from where we live and Walker Percy is buried. (We monks struggle more against numb Catholics here than we care to.) I would not say that our nearby city's inhabitants, the majority of them black, have fallen into a malaise. They care about the names of the schools that their children attend. Is this wrong?

(The Rev.) Albert Terrillion, O.S.B.
Saint Joseph Abbey
Saint Benedict, LA

RJN replies:

I could suggest that naming a school after Thurgood Marshall should not be confused with "overcoming the ramifications of sin," or that New Yorkers feel no need to change the name given the city by the conquering Brits, but I will limit myself to protesting that just because 156 Fifth Avenue was once the headquarters of the Presbyterian Church and of the National Council of Churches does not mean that it is "sterile." Notorious, maybe.

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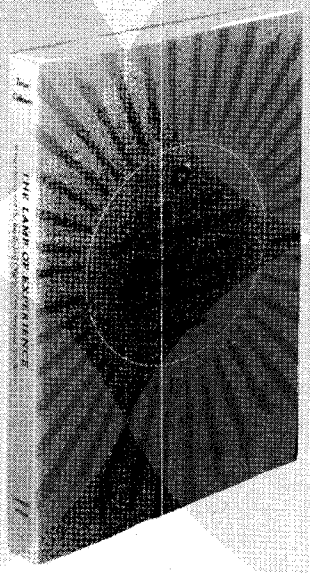
A Classic Work on America's Founding

THE LAMP OF EXPERIENCE
WHIG HISTORY AND THE INTELLECTUAL ORIGINS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

By Trevor Colbourn

". . . a joy to read."
—Lucius F. Ellsworth



In a landmark work, a leading scholar of the eighteenth century examines the ways in which an understanding of the nature of history influenced the thinking of the founding fathers. As Jack P. Greene has observed, "[The Whig] conception saw the past as a continual struggle between liberty and virtue on one hand and arbitrary power and corruption on the other." Many founders found in this intellectual tradition what Josiah Quincy, Jr., called the "true old English liberty," and it was this Whig tradition—this conception of liberty—that the champions of American independence and the crafters of the new republic sought to perpetuate. Colbourn supports his thesis—that "[I]ndependence was in large measure the product of the historical concepts of the men who made it"—by documenting what books were read most widely by the founding generation. He also cites diaries, personal correspondence, newspapers, and legislative records.

Trevor Colbourn is President Emeritus of the University of Central Florida.

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This Time

The Weird World of Sports

James Nuechterlein

Sports nuts express their nuttiness in a variety of ways. My colleague Matt Berke, for example, is a monomaniacal sports nut. He likes only one sport, baseball, and only one team, the New York Yankees. Which of these is the more unfathomable is hard to say. Baseball is, of all sports other than soccer and curling, the most boring—George Will's hymns to its subtle rhythms and arcane strategies notwithstanding—and the Yankees, of all teams, the most to be despised. Yankee fans pretend to hate owner George Steinbrenner, but they know, deep in their hearts, that it is entirely right that their team's fortunes are in the hands of the Ivan the Terrible of the sports world. As I learned in a childhood blighted by New York's domination of the game, rooting for the Yankees is like rooting for the Germans against Poland in 1939 or for the Soviet Union against Finland the year following. But I digress.

I am today what you might call a quasi-sports nut, deeply interested but not fully consumed. As a child, though, I was the real thing. In lieu of a life—how easily we forget childhood's vast seas of boredom—I had sports. I played them enthusiastically but with indifferent skill. I was small, a step slow, and had mediocre coordination. Most hitters first encounter frustration with curveballs; I could never quite get around on good fastballs. But I was a brilliant fan. I devoured not just the sports pages, but all the sports magazines and sports books I could get my hands on. I had a gift for memorization, and to this day my brain is cluttered with trivia of the oddest sort. How many people do you know who can name all eight teams of the old PONY League (PONY being the acronymical title of the postwar Class D baseball league consisting of teams from Pennsylvania, Ontario, and New York)?

As with all true sports nuts, my knowledge and enthusiasm were indiscriminate. It wasn't just baseball, basketball, and football I followed in minute detail. (I picked All-American football teams three teams deep.) I could, for example, list in proper order the top contenders in all the boxing ranks from flyweight to heavyweight. I not only listened every week to the Gillette Friday night fights on radio—I scored them. Needless to say, my scores often bore little relation to the actual results. The first fight I remember seeing on TV was at a friend's house when, to my great dismay, Rocky Marciano knocked out Joe Louis.

Sports on radio had a magic that TV sadly demystified. If I had to pick my single most glorious moment in sports, it would be listening to Michigan beat Ohio State, 9-3, in the "Battle of the Blizzard" at Columbus in 1950 and win a trip to the Rose Bowl. Chuck Ortmann punted twenty-four times for Michigan in that game, and it must have been an excruciatingly dull white blur to watch—the field markers were obliterated—but *hearing* Michigan pull the upset was nothing short of exhilarating.

As I grew older, my interests (beginning with girls) diversified, but I have never entirely put aside childish things. I still spend more time watching sports than I could, were I a Type-A personality, rationally justify. But I am not such a personality, and so the time is redeemed. Sports events on TV are watchable depending not only on the particular sport itself, but also on the level at which it is played. College basketball is very good, but professional basketball is almost as boring as baseball (at any level). Pro football, far and away the most riveting of television sports events, is clearly superior to its college counterpart, which, excellent at its best, can fade to unutterable tedium when the game is the Utah School of Mines vs. the University of Southern North Dakota at Hoople. I am as certain that these judgments are right as I am entirely baffled as to why they are right.

The time I commit to sports is one thing, the emotional toll it takes on me quite another. Sports does not matter as much as it did in childhood, but it matters more than I can explain. Sometimes I can hardly explain it at all. Take baseball. Other than for an occasional World Series game, I can almost never sit still for a full nine innings. Yet every morning during baseball season as I listen to the early sports news I experience either a small surge of pleasure or a small pang of regret depending on whether the Detroit Tigers won or lost the day before. I don't really care to watch them any more, but the thrill of victory or—with the Tigers, much more frequently—the agony of defeat still registers.

With my favorite sports team, the University of Michigan football team, matters are quite out of control. The Wolverines are the most frustrating of teams, almost always in contention but seldom quite at the top. For more years (after 1950) than I like to recall, the question was always the same: would Michigan break my heart by losing to Ohio State, and thus not make the Rose Bowl, or beat the Buckeyes and then lose to Southern California or UCLA at Pasadena?

Now, when I say "break my heart," non-sports nuts will dismiss that as absurd exaggeration. But all those who are similarly afflicted recognize that, absurd or not, the pain is real. And so—though, unfortunately, not quite as strong—is the joy when things turn out

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right. This past year, when Michigan beat Ohio State and went on to win the Rose Bowl and a share of the national championship, it (almost) made up for a half century of disappointment.

So what is it—aside perhaps from arrested development—that accounts for such disproportionate emotional investment in the ultimately insignificant? (No matter how many times I recite the mantra "It's only a game" while watching Michigan play, I never persuade myself for a minute. The churning of my stomach tells the real story.) It's not, as some feminists argue, a "guy thing" designed as a prop to uphold fragile male egos and perpetuate a macho culture. I'm not into most guy things: cars bore me, and I have never understood the glories of the hardware store. (Plus I almost never beat my wife, even on Super Bowl Sunday.) Nor am I impressed by deep-think interpretations that impose on sports events a burden of meaning they cannot bear. I am unpersuaded by the argument that the designated-hitter rule threatens civilization as we have known it.

Sports is simply a grace: a minor grace, but a grace nonetheless. (At truly incandescent sports moments, as when the basketball team of my alma mater and former employer Valparaiso University this year advanced, against all expectation and indeed against all rational hope, into the third round of the NCAA championship, the grace takes on the character of the miraculous.) Sports relieves the weight of life. It satisfies, in an innocent way, our competitive urges. It reminds us, precisely in its absurd elevation of the trivial, not to take ourselves too seriously. There are those, it is true, whose preoccupation with sports becomes so all-consuming as to constitute a moral disorder. A life lived in a sports bar is a life ill spent. But for the great majority of us, sports provides a pleasurable interlude in life for which we not only need not repent, but for which we should offer continuing prayers of gratitude. FT

Alexius and Giles

Patron Saints of Beggars

We beg you,
mend the ways of pretend mendicants,
imposters who pose pious and pitiful
on our staked-out streets.

Uncover the shades of the blind
who really see, the crippled who limp
selectively in rich company.
Competition is keen;

let's keep the neighborhood clean
of riff-raff and rabble-rousers,
hypocrites hogging the best hovels,
preying on the easiest weak.

We give our dutiful mite,
pull pennies from our palms,
cough-up an ungodly percentage
for each street corner converted
to our enterprising petitions.

Blessed are we the paupers
of prayerful panhandling.
We beseech you, then, oh Saints,
open your holy hearts
and wallets, and let us in.

Marjorie Maddox

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Opinion

Affirming Ourselves to Death

Gilbert Meilaender

In his engagingly titled book, *What's Wrong with the World,* G. K. Chesterton argued that his fellow citizens could not repair the defects of the family because they had no ideal for which to aim. Neither the Tory (Gudge) nor the Socialist (Hudge) viewed the family as sacred or had an image of what the family at its best might be.

> The Tory says he wants to preserve family life in Cindertown; the Socialist very reasonably points out to him that in Cindertown at present there isn't any family life to preserve. But Hudge, the Socialist, in his turn, is highly vague and mysterious about whether he would preserve the family life if there were any; or whether he will try to restore it where it has disappeared. . . . The Tory sometimes talks as if he wanted to tighten the domestic bonds that do not exist; the Socialist as if he wanted to loosen the bonds that do not bind anybody. The question we all want to ask of both of them is the original ideal question, "Do you want to keep the family at all?"

Without moral ideals a society cannot shape much of a common life. And sometimes one moral ideal—isolated and taken by itself—can undermine all others. For us the language of compassion—perhaps the stench of Christian, or at least Protestant, moralism—has done just that.

Feeling it necessary to "affirm" every person in whatever state he or she may be, we find it difficult to state and adhere to any standard of conduct. To articulate such an ideal might seem too much like condemning those who do not meet it. A recent illustration of this truth grows out of our society's ongoing discussion of human cloning.

In December of last year Laurence Tribe weighed in with some "Second Thoughts on Cloning" in the op-ed pages of the *New York Times.* In years past when cloning had been discussed, Tribe says, he had "leaned toward prohibition as the safest course." But now he has started to change his mind. In part, it seems, this is because he has begun to realize that the arguments against cloning, were he to accept them, might also commit him to other positions he is unwilling to adopt. Indeed, he might have to get off the train of the sexual revolution. For to worry about the way in which cloning separates the making of babies from the sexual relation of a man and woman might lead to other worries: about surrogate motherhood, gay marriage and adoption, about the many "unconventional ways of linking erotic attachment, romantic commitment, genetic replication, gestational mothering, and the joys and responsibilities of child rearing."

These are all questions worthy of our reflection, but more interesting to me here is Tribe's principal reason for concern. It is inevitable, he suggests, that sooner or later a human being will be cloned. Restrictions, even prohibitions, will be bypassed, the line we have drawn in thought will be transgressed in practice, and we will be confronted with the clone of a human being. What then? How will we react?

If we have condemned and banned cloning, and the prohibited deed has nonetheless been done, we may, Tribe fears, think of the clone as an "outcast." We will have produced beings whose existence we will "have chosen to label as a misfortune and, in essence, to condemn." We will be on our way to a caste system in which some persons are "marginalized as not fully human." In effect, therefore, by setting ourselves firmly against (the inevitable) cloning, we are creating circumstances that will invite a failure of compassion in the future.

This is a form of argument that has become quite common in our society. Indeed, we can see an instance of it in an example Tribe himself gives to buttress his point. Consider, he suggests, how children of unmarried parents were once "stigmatized" as "illegitimate." The ideal we held—that children should be born to a man and woman who are married—invited less than compassionate reactions when that ideal was violated. It has, Tribe suggests, been a long struggle to overcome this reaction and learn compassion in such cases. What he does not note, of course, is that this long struggle has helped to undercut the ideal, and in so doing has helped to created a world in which children are worse off than they were when the ideal held sway.

Compassion, taken alone and severed from deeper, richer understandings of our nature and destiny, kills morality. Taken as the sole moral principle it undercuts our ability to articulate an ideal for human life. That is surely true of Tribe's angle of vision on cloning. In order to assure that we do not risk making any person feel marginalized, we are suddenly forbidden to condemn what seems wrong to us. We are unable any longer to raise and discuss questions about what the nature of a cloned person would in

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fact be, what it means to be human, whether the bond between the generations created by ordinary human reproduction is integral to our humanity.

Tribe is not wrong to fear that cloning threatens human equality. As one made by us rather than one who comes from us, the clone would be a product rather than a gift. And when we make products, we determine their point and purpose. True compassion should draw us away from such circumstances, away from actions that might create cases metaphysically too baffling for our morality to address. But Tribe, as with the instance of removing the stigma from illegitimacy, purchases equality by means of a compassion that is the only moral law, and that makes for too shriveled and truncated a morality.

We ought, of course, to care as best we can for those who are victimized or marginalized in our society. But when we hesitate to pass judgment it should not be because we fear that moral ideals will, by their very existence, make those who fall short feel condemned. That is a dead end, if there ever was one. Bereft of any larger sense of the human good, unable to articulate (lest we hurt feelings) what is best in human life and what the family at its best might be, we will—if we follow Tribe's prescription—simply lurch from one affirmation to the next until even the language of compassion finally loses its point. That is the possibility about which we ought to have second thoughts and which might remind us, in Chesterton's words, of "the importance of an ideal."

GILBERT MEILAENDER *holds the Board of Directors Chair in Christian Ethics at Valparaiso University.*

Justice Brennan Lives

William Bentley Ball

The late Justice William J. Brennan, Jr. was apotheosized at his death by the *New York Times* for the rich legacy the *Times* deemed he had conferred on American jurisprudence. His greatest gift, so it was said, was his espousal of the idea of a "living Constitution," whereby (in his words) Justices would adapt the Constitution "to cope with current problems and current needs." They should thus reject "any static meaning it may have had in ages dead and gone." Brennan's pursuit of amending the Constitution through interpretation by unelected officials would cause him, among other things, to vote repeatedly to strike away the legal protections that a world dead and gone had traditionally afforded unborn human beings.

Less noticed at Brennan's death was a view he had expressed in 1977 in the *Harvard Law Review*, urging state supreme courts to interpret state constitutions in a similarly broad manner. Were Brennan still alive, he would rejoice that the Alaska Supreme Court in *Valley Hospital Association, Inc. v. Mat-Su Coalition for Choice* has recently not only followed his bidding but has perhaps exceeded his fondest hopes.

In 1970 Alaska enacted a statute that made abortions legal if performed in a hospital or other governmentally approved facility. A clause was added providing that no hospital or person was required to participate in an abortion or would be legally liable for refusing to do so. In 1992 the members of Valley Hospital Association (VHA), a private secular organization made up of residents of Mat-su Borough, adopted a policy prohibiting abortions in its hospital except in cases of pregnancy resulting from rape or incest, or where the life of the mother is threatened, or because "the fetus has a condition that is incompatible with life." Thereafter a pro-abortion coalition filed suit in state court against the hospital to bar its observance of this policy. The Alaska Supreme Court has now upheld the injunction that the lower state court granted in favor of the coalition.

Before examining the reasoning of the Alaska high court, it is important to note that the significance of its decision goes far beyond the valley of Mat-Su Borough, Alaska. The case was staged as a national test case by the Center for Reproductive Law & Policy. Kathryn Dolbert, the attorney who successfully argued the pro-choice position before the U.S. Supreme Court in *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* (1992), now appeared in the Alaska courts to argue the coalition's case. Like-minded forces (e.g., the ACLU) joined with her in attacking VHA's policy. This was a national test case, because even though the ruling is effective only in Alaska and a precedent only there, it can serve as a model for pro-abortion forces in forty-nine other states.

The opinion of the Alaska Supreme Court is startling. It begins by observing that "the [U.S.] Supreme Court's articulation of the United States Constitution's protection of reproductive rights establishes the minimum protection provided to women in Alaska." Having acknowledged the "minimum protection" afforded by *Casey* (and, of course, by *Roe v. Wade*, 1973), the court goes on to indulge to the full the interpretive license Brennan had urged the state supreme courts to employ. The *VHA* opinion observes grandly that "this Court is at liberty to make constitutional progress in Alaska by our own interpretations." Indeed, it says, "We are under a duty to develop additional constitutional rights and privileges under our Alaska Constitution."

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The Alaska high court found its basis for developing "additional constitutional rights" in Article I, Section 22 of the Alaska Constitution, which provides that "the right of the people's privacy is recognized and shall not be infringed." Wholly agreeing with the U.S. Supreme Court that the right of privacy is the proper basis by which to justify baby-killing, the Alaska court, in a remarkable exhibition of home-made law, translated the simple sentence in the Alaska Constitution into a text of the justices' own drafting. The legislative history of the provision clearly showed that it was designed merely to secure informational privacy, protection of reputation—in general, what Justice Louis Brandeis had famously called "the right to be let alone." The provision, adopted prior to *Roe v. Wade*, says nothing about "reproductive rights." But reading privacy rights to include abortion rights, and constitutions to be amendable by justices, the court held privacy to be a matter of far broader scope than that recognized in *Casey*. Since it treated *Casey* as providing but a minimal definition of privacy, it repudiated even the marginal protection of the unborn (e.g., informed consent, parental consent, waiting periods) upheld in *Casey*.

But the court was not content to leave matters at that. Attempting to probe into the core of the privacy right, the court oddly concluded that essentially privacy has to do with bodies. "Few things," essayed the court, "[are] more personal than one's body." "[A] woman's control of her body" is what is at stake in the abortion decision. The only authority the court could come up with as ground for its emphasis on bodies was its own 1972 decision holding a school's policy on hair length to be unconstitutional.

Turning from body language, the court next considered VHA's reliance on the exempting clause in the 1970 statute. Although it admitted VHA had proved it had a "sincere moral belief that elective abortion is wrong," the court held the exempting statute to apply "only to sectarian facilities." The court thus ruled that no nonreligious entity—even, as in the case of VHA, a membership organization whose members had raised a conscience objection to performing abortions—possessed the statutory right described in the exempting statute. That right was outweighed by the fundamental constitutional right to abortion.

It is important to note that the court's reference to "sectarian facilities" cannot be read as its holding a religious hospital protected by the exempting clause. Because of the extreme emphasis given by the court to the fundamental nature of the abortion right, no one can be assured that a religious facility's objection to abortion on Free Exercise grounds would be sustained in Alaska. Admitting that VHA had expressed "a sincere moral belief," the court nevertheless insisted that "constitutional rights [to abortion] cannot be allowed to yield simply because of disagreement with them." We can therefore say that the right of religious hospitals to object to performing abortions, which is rooted in their right to free exercise of their religion, is at best on hold in Alaska. But that right is threatened in view of what else the Alaska Supreme Court had to say about VHA.

VHA's hospital, the court found, was actually *not* a private hospital, though it had always deemed itself to be. If private hospitals are conceivably exempt from a requirement to perform abortions, government hospitals are not. VHA assumed that to be the state of the law—lamentable but nevertheless true. But to its astonishment, the VHA hospital was held by the court to be a *governmental* body—a quasi-public institution or "state actor" in constitutional lingo. As a state actor, it would be bound by Alaska's constitutional provision barring the state from denying anyone the right to an abortion. VHA's hospital was held to be a state actor because of various ties it has to the state. The court noted that "VHA has a special relationship with the State through the State's Certificate of Need program." In addition, "VHA has received construction funds, land, and operating funds from the State, local, and federal governments." As we think further of *religious* hospitals we should view these ties with close care. Religious hospitals are typically licensed under state certificate of need provisions. They also are generally recipients of substantial public funds—directly or indirectly. While many states' laws contain exempting clauses like Alaska's, these will not avail them if they are found to be state actors by virtue of their government ties.

VHA did not appeal its case to the Supreme Court of the United States. Alaska's Supreme Court had exercised its acknowledged power to rule with finality on issues raised under the state constitution. And, since VHA is not a religious institution, it could not have raised a Free Exercise claim under the federal Constitution. Yet could not VHA have suggested to the U.S. Supreme Court that, since the Court has held that there is a constitutional right to kill unborn human beings, there is surely also the constitutional right, even of a secular hospital, to refuse to? This argument would have been grounded simply on the Fourteenth Amendment's Due Process Clause, which forbids states from arbitrarily denying liberty to persons within their jurisdiction. Perhaps that thought may seem merely Monday-morning quarterbacking. Indeed, it is unlikely that the Supreme Court, as presently constituted, would have granted review to such a claim. Yet with an issue of such immense moral consequence, it might have been worth a try.

In any event, VHA's case is now history and Justice Brennan's dream is realized in one state. But the radical insularity once embraced by the concept of "states' rights" is now seen in another form: the right of a state to abolish even those minimum standards

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in favor of human life that federal constitutional law still recognizes as necessary to the common good.

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More Scandals of the Evangelical Mind

Preston Jones

When I was a kid the closest thing to smutty literature I was able to get my hands on was a book by Tim and Beverly Lahaye called *The Marriage Act*. There were, of course, occasional, if red-faced, glances at issues of *National Geographic* to be had, but, as it was my plight to have been raised in a sober fundamentalist home, Tim and Bev's commentary was my primary source. I read it often.

It isn't that I ever took the Lahayes' advice all that seriously, even in the abstract visions my laddish mind could conjure. Take, for instance, their suggestion that before honeymooners do anything important they should kneel beside the marriage bed and invoke God's blessing. Sure, one can understand the rationale behind this suggestion; it's just that, like the annual "Merry Christmas, you're going to hell" sermon each December 24th at the Southern Baptist church of my youth, there is something inappropriate about it. The wedding service is for praying, after all; the honeymoon is for, well, something else.

I was born again at 12:10 P.M. on September 13, 1981. That is, I was born again at 12:10 P.M. on September 13, 1981, while sitting on the left end of the next to the last pew on the left-hand side of the sanctuary attached to Immanuel Baptist Church in San Bernardino, California, which has, since the mid-1980s, become a mega-church. I'm not sure how my conversion came about, really. One minute I was having a drug-induced paranoid delusion centered on the police helicopters that for some reason were always following me; the next I was praying. And that was that. Martha, children's minister at Immanuel, says that as early as 12:15 she could tell something great had happened to me, which came as no surprise to her since she, with others, had had me on her prayer list for quite some time. (I later discovered that Martha was a "prayer warrior.")

In the week following my conversion I took after many of the good fundamentalist teenagers I knew and invested in a stack of Christian t-shirts. My favorite one exclaimed, "True peace begins when Jesus comes in." And then there was another that advertised the Rapture, though I don't remember its exact wording. Indeed, I can't recall most of the slogans I carried about on my body in my teenage years, but I know I prayed fervently that God would use those t-shirts to touch hearts and lives.

And so it went. "Lord, please help me to drive correctly so that people will see my bumper sticker which praises you; and may your spirit lead them to faith." "Lord, as I sit here in class just reading my Bible"—I was supposed to be practicing algebra—"I pray that I would shine your love and that the people here would come to you." And all the while I wondered if Amy Grant, who according to rumor had stopped giving altar calls at her concerts, was backsliding.

Then came the year I hoped to head off to Africa where I could be martyred. Before that I played guitar in a Christian rock band. Before that I barely graduated from high school; I didn't think that my non-Christian teachers ever said anything worth listening to. "Lord, as I sit here while this teacher tells lies about evolution, please help me to take a stand for your Word." (*Pastor Bill, I just want to praise the Lord that he gave me the strength to take a stand for him at school last Thursday. No one said that they wanted to get saved but I think that a lot of seeds were planted and that the Lord will cash in on them later.*)

After it became clear that I wasn't going to be able to achieve martyrdom in Africa—I couldn't actually bring myself to raise "support" due to a "spirit of pride," according to one fellow—I joined the United States Navy. That was in 1986.

Four years later I met a very nice young woman at a Christian concert. She was a typically confused teenager, which, since I was a cradle-robber, was no problem. I paid her way to summer Bible camp. She got saved, and three years later got engaged to me. We were married in an Anglican church. That was five Christian calendars ago.

In the course of these five years and the two that preceded them, my wife and I have learned a lot about the Christian tradition. We have learned that rituals aren't really all that bad, and that to the extent that they can stand in faith's stead when faith itself grows dim, they are precious. We have also concluded that the Pope isn't the Antichrist.

Of course, a large number of fundamentalists still think that the Vatican is the Great Whore foretold in the Apocalypse, which is why some of them perceive that the cooperation fostered between evangelicals and Catholics by this journal is yet one more proof that the Great Apostasy is underway. Bill Bright and Chuck Colson are undoubtedly on prayer lists throughout the land, thousands being burdened by

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the thought that these chieftains have fallen under a deceptive spell.

Thus at a recent Bible study I heard one woman request a prayer for her neighbor's salvation. "She's a serious Catholic," the supplicant observed, "and she doesn't know anything about Christianity." That a Protestant would think Catholics misguided is one thing; that a Protestant would think a devout Catholic ignorant of Christian tradition is just plain scandalous.

A great deal has been said in recent years about what Mark Noll has called the "scandal of the evangelical mind." "The scandal of the evangelical mind," writes Noll, "is that there is not much of an evangelical mind"—and particularly disastrous in his view has been the advent of such pseudo-intellectual disciplines as "creation science" and premillenialist prophecy studies on the order of Hal Lindsay's best-selling and oft-reissued *Late Great Planet Earth.* Meanwhile, Noll observes, the "whole spectrum of modern learning, including economics and political science, literary criticism and imaginative writing, historical inquiry and philosophical studies, linguistics and the history of science, social theory and the arts," is largely ignored by evangelicals. Noll's intention was not to rail against fundamentalists; he noted that his book was a *cri de coeur* from a "wounded lover." He sincerely hopes to see the scandal of the evangelical mind removed.

Much of the widespread conversation spurred by Noll's book has undoubtedly been beneficial. Probably more than ever, aspiring evangelical scholars intend to bring their work to the secular world beyond their comfortable religious spheres; they aim to have their work published by prestigious secular presses; they want, as is often said, to love God with their minds. But if the discussions in which thoughtful evangelicals have recently engaged have contributed to these happy trends, so have they sometimes veered into less fruitful territory.

Consider, for instance, the self-deprecation that seems to have become fashionable in some evangelical quarters. Surely the discussions of the scandal of the evangelical mind were not intended to make a virtue of casting aspersions on unenlightened Christians. Yet it seems to have in some cases come to that. Thus in 1996 a prominent Canadian press published a book that holds all evangelicaldom in the American South in outright contempt. Indeed, one point of the book is to distinguish Canadian evangelicalism "from the more extreme evangelicalism in the southern United States," though readers are never informed how to distinguish "the more extreme" forms from generic southern evangelicalism, since the author himself claims to be "furious with the entire southern evangelical world." And fretting that "the South Carolina religious reality" might become "the Canadian evangelical destiny," he paints all southern evangelicals as hate-mongers. One would not of course be surprised if it was a secularist who held up an entire population of Christian people to derision, but these regrettable words were written by a Christian who, borrowing casually from Noll, also called his ruminations a *cri de coeur.* A particularly sad aspect of this spectacle was that this book was endorsed by prominent Canadian evangelicals.

In a recent edition of *Books & Culture,* Doug Frank of Houghton College also uses *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* as an occasion to chide those in spiritual charge of his childhood for having somehow failed him. He wishes his fundamentalist forebears had been "better equipped, theologically and personally, to see how the life vest that holds us up in the storm can become a straitjacket that keeps us from exploring what lies below the waves"; he wonders if the Sunday School jingles he was taught as a child "snatched away my freedom to think." Indeed, "I wonder if those happy little jingles, representing and reinforcing a closed universe of evangelical rhetoric, snatched away my freedom to inhabit fully the complicated human world inside me where terror and joy, loss and recovery, oscillate capriciously." Frank says that these days he wants less assurance and dogmatism than fundamentalists offer; he wants more intellectual vigor; and he wants, in his words, truer "discipleship to the slaughtered lamb."

One wonders what the people who devoted themselves to ensuring that Mr. Frank received a decent upbringing would do in the face of such allegations. My guess is that they would put him on a prayer list. Or maybe they would ask him to just leave them alone, since they had given him the best education they could.

Not that they had all that much to give in the first place. Robert Wuthnow has observed that evangelicals "seldom understand the Bible very well, know little about theology, buy heavily into the therapeutic culture of feel-goodism, and are caught up in a cycle of overspending and consumption like everyone else." But in an increasingly illiterate age isn't it *something* that at least modestly attentive fundamentalist young people have some familiarity with the Bible? One cannot expect many students to be able to appreciate, say, Eliot's "Journey of the Magi" these days, but one can expect, or at least hope, that one's evangelical students will recognize its biblical allusions. And however facile fundamentalist theology may be, is it not nevertheless *something*? There is certainly more to life than the fact that God loves us and has a wonderful plan for our lives, but those who cannot go far beyond this single profundity should not be scorned. And while it is true that this country's evangelicals consume as much as their non-evangelical peers, it is also true that, generally speaking, they give more away. And isn't it *something* that were it

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not for concerned evangelicals the pro-life cause would be in more desperate straits than it is? And that American family life would be an even greater disaster than it is?

The point is that it is one thing to maintain, as Noll does, that thoughtful evangelicals have a lot of work to do toward improving their collective intellectual life, and it is quite another thing to disparage Christian people who are simply not interested in intellectual things. Put another way, few would say that evangelicals should not honestly and forthrightly criticize themselves and their forebears. But castigating the perceived simple-mindedness of Christian people who have not had and will not have the slightest interest in the life of the mind is wrong.

Writing to the Philippians, St. Paul states his emphatic disapproval of some who preached Christ in a spirit of "envy and strife," but they nevertheless preached Christ, says Paul, "and therein I rejoice."

The educated and fashionable have long held the great unwashed in contempt. It is a temptation that critically minded evangelicals should resist. Like many contemporary evangelicals, I am not the fundamentalist I once was. But I will forever thank God for September 13, 1981.

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George Rochberg's Revolution

Michael Linton

Some revolutions are noisy affairs from the start. The riot with which the Parisians greeted the premiere of Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* comes immediately to mind (although it was Nijinsky's wildly modern choreography more than Stravinsky's music that provoked the brouhaha). But other revolutions start quietly and get noisier only with time. Twenty years after the event, the first performances of George Rochberg's *Concord Quartets* appear to have been the beginnings of that second kind of revolution. At their New York premiere, Leonard Bernstein embraced the composer in his legendary bear hug and called the quartets masterpieces. But other critics weren't so sure. Most are now. In those and other works, Rochberg boldly challenged the music world's status quo, and his challenge has resonated through the ensuing decades, shifting the profile of modern music at the century's close into a shape that thirty years ago would have been unthinkable.

This July Rochberg turns eighty, and his birthday is being celebrated with reissues of recordings and concerts across the country. There is much to celebrate and to honor. The son of Ukrainian Jews who came to the United States in 1912 and 1913, Rochberg is part of that remarkable generation of Eastern European emigrants and their children—including Aaron Copland, Marc Blitzstein, George and Ira Gershwin, Leonard Bernstein, and Irving Berlin—who propelled American music into the forefront of international artistic sophistication and significance. Rochberg served as publications director for Theodore Presser, one of America's most important music publishing houses. In a period when the university became the principal patron of art music, he chaired the music department at the University of Pennsylvania, propelling Penn into international importance by appointing the composer George Crumb and the theorist Leonard Meyer. He was one of his generation's most influential essayists, writing widely and eloquently on music theory, composition, and aesthetics. But above all else, Rochberg's importance rests upon his music. In order to understand this music, or at least to appreciate its revolutionary importance, we first have to remember the musical world in which Rochberg began to compose.

In the decades following the Second World War "progressive" composition generally was pulled in two directions: "serialism" and "chance." The former was a way of composing in which the twelve pitches of the octave are organized into melodic sets and presented forwards, backwards, upside-down, transposed, and fractured. The serialism of Anton von Webern (1883-1945) was the first to exert its dominance. Webern's teacher, Arnold Schoenberg (1874-1951), is credited with inventing serialism, but in the decade before his death, Webern refined twelve-tone composition into a means of producing music of the highest delicacy and most astringent intellectualism. By the 1950s, Webern had replaced both Stravinsky and Schoenberg as the brightest star in twentieth-century music, and his works became the model for all "smart" composition.

There were many reasons for serial composition's attraction to composers. One was the fact that the music and the mystique of Romanticism had been so appropriated by the Nazis that many intellectuals simply wanted it to perish in the *Götterdämmerung* of Nazi Berlin. Serialism, and the distance it established between cerebral composition and emotional response, was seen as a language purified of the kinds of excesses that had lead to the horrors of the mid-century.

Another reason for serialism's attractiveness lay in the fact that, at least in America, composers were increasingly university professors and not performers. The star departments in American universities were the science departments, and the most

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acclaimed faculty were physicists. The language of science is mathematics, and it was only natural that composers/professors would find themselves gravitating to the lingua franca of their locale. The professors didn't compose for audiences, but for faculty peers (and tenure and promotion committees). Serial music, with its sets, subsets, graphs, and pseudo-algebraic incantations, was a perfect artistic language for such a society—indeed, the music didn't even have to be defended by the way it sounded at all, but rather could be justified by the numerical and graphic brilliance of its description.

Serial music also just looked modern. Webern's works were like the buildings of the new international style, bare of ornament, sleek, and lean. Later composers would preserve that austerity, but would make the music look much more complicated, the kind of thing you might think a physicist would understand. But the most important reason for the style's attraction lay in the fact that, at least in Webern's hands, serialism could be used to make extraordinarily beautiful and elegant works of art. When the folksy Americanism of Copland seemed contrived, the traditional tonality of Menotti little more than kitsch, and the modal twists of Britten just Anglican obscurantism, serialism looked like an adventurous way to the music of the future. With typical bluntness (and brutality) the young French composer Pierre Boulez wrote, "Any musician who has not felt . . . the necessity of the twelve-tone language is *of no use*!"

At the same time as Boulez's malediction, a second way to this music of the future was being championed by the Californian John Cage. In his 1951 Imaginary Landscape No. 4, Cage wrote for twenty-four performers "playing" twelve radios, each radio tuned to a different station. The music was whatever "chanced" to be broadcast at that moment; no two performances of the piece were alike. Just as serial music appealed to the culture of science, Cage's "aleatoric" pieces appealed to the strong antinomianism of the beat generation and the faddish Zen Buddhism of the hippies. Music, like tie-dye t-shirts, could be anything thing you wanted it to be.

Rochberg began his career as a major figure in the serial camp. After fighting in Europe in the Second World War (he was seriously wounded in Normandy), Rochberg returned to Philadelphia, where he studied at the Curtis Institute and the University of Pennsylvania. His works quickly gained attention, and in 1950 he left for Italy, having won both the Rome Prize and a Fulbright fellowship. In Italy Rochberg became friends of the anti-Fascist composer Luigi Dallapiccola (1904-1975), then the leader of the Italian serialist avant garde. Rochberg became convinced of the "inevitability" of twelve-tone composition, and began writing his first serial compositions. He later wrote of this period that he felt himself "living at the very edge of the musical frontier, of music itself."

Upon returning to America, Rochberg published the first study of twelve-tone music, received awards from the Guggenheim and Koussevitsky Foundations, and was appointed to the faculties of Curtis and Penn. His works were performed by the country's major orchestras and chamber music ensembles, and he supported his compositions by highly regarded and influential essays. By his mid-forties, Rochberg was among the most successful artists of his generation. And he was a thoroughly "modern," i.e., serial, artist.

But in 1961 the Rochbergs' seventeen-year-old son, Paul, fell ill with a brain tumor. He died three years later, throwing his father into despair. Confronted with his son's death, Rochberg struggled to give that tragedy some meaning through his music, but the serialism upon which his career had been built he now found empty and meaningless. It was a language that could not bear the weight of his sorrow.

In the next decade, Rochberg struggled to find a musical syntax suitable for that sorrow, marking his struggle in many works, but in particular with a series of remarkable pieces composed for the Concord Quartet, the string quartet then in residence at Dartmouth. First in his third (1972) and later in his fourth, fifth, and sixth quartets (from 1977 and 1978), Rochberg included movements that were thoroughly tonal. He was even audacious enough to make the third movement of the sixth quartet a variation upon Pachelbel's famous Canon in D.

There were no riots at Rochberg premieres, but tongues did begin to click. It might have been acceptable if Rochberg, like Cage, had simply adopted aleatoric techniques, but using tonality was a gross breach of etiquette. Strict serialist composers—his old allies—began to attack Rochberg's new tonal works. The works were cowardly and cheap. Rochberg had betrayed the "progress" of music. His tonal harmonies were "Victorian" (the period's ultimate derision). Rochberg had betrayed his "moral vision." Some critics even suggested fraud. The consensus was that Rochberg had replaced the artistic integrity of his earlier music with a kind of delusional nostalgia. He was no longer a progressive artist but a recalcitrant crank.

The critics' animus was justified, but not for the reasons they gave. These works were not cowardly or cheap. They were not—nor did Rochberg intend them to be—mere imitations of previous styles, as any investigation of the scores would show. The real scandal lay not in Rochberg's rejection of doctrinaire serialism or aleatoric composition, but rather in his far more radical rejection of the whole philosophical foundation of the postwar avant garde. These works were the manifesto of a revolt.

Although ostensibly contrary styles, postwar serial music and aleatoric music were twin utterances of

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the same creed. They were ways to suppress, and if possible suffocate, the individuality of the artist. In the strictest serialism, the personality is incapacitated by the imposition of mechanistic devices, the individuality of the artist disappearing into the operations of the machine. The music is the way it is because this is the way the machine makes it to be. In aleatoric music, the artist loses his unique voice within the babble of random happenings. There is no difference between music and non-music, between the excellent and the tawdry, and, ultimately, between being and nothingness.

It was this descent into artistic nihilism that Rochberg rejected, and it was this kind of music that he found incapable of expressing either the depth of his despair or the hope of his vision. Unlike Stravinsky, who fundamentally viewed his music as entertainment, and Cage, for whom music was a kind of self-effacing game, Rochberg had always taken a prophetic view of his art. Like Beethoven (and Schoenberg himself), Rochberg believed that art had the noble purpose of lifting humanity beyond itself to a more exalted, and eventually metaphysical, height. Seeing firsthand the nightmare wrought by the Nazi mob (and, as a Jew, taking the struggle with fascism more personally than many Americans), Rochberg had consciously dedicated himself to a life of creation when a young man on the battlefields of Europe. Twenty years later, that decision was forcing him to reevaluate his art and to challenge the artistic establishment of which he had been so successful a part.

Part of that reevaluation lead Rochberg to reembrace tonality and discard serialism. But while Rochberg rejected serialism, he did not reject the atonal composition out of which serialism had grown and which characterized its harmonic syntax. Instead, Rochberg began to construct his music out of both tonal and atonal languages. In so doing, he dramatically reinterpreted the notion of stylistic uniformity that had been a hallmark of the Western aesthetic since antiquity. He refused to abandon "past" musical styles, insisting that they continue to live—transformed by his individual artistry but recognizable nonetheless—in his new art. By including these diverse musics, Rochberg believed that he had expanded the emotional range that modern music was able to express. He had found a contemporary language that could both bear the weight of despair and point to transcendence. And—unlike either strict serialism or aleatoric composition—it was a language that was pointedly individualistic.

The eloquence of that musical language is well represented on CD. Although the *Concord Quartets* have yet to be digitally reissued (the 1982 RCA vinyl set is still worth finding: RCA ARL2-4198), CRI has released two CDs that give a synopsis of Rochberg's remarkable career. For those wary of modern music, begin with the 1972 *Ricordanza* (CRI CD 769). This one-movement work for cello and piano represents Rochberg at his most tonal and elegiac. On that same CD is the 1978 Asian-influenced "Slow Fires of Autumn" for harp and flute, an impressionist and meditative piece that grows out of a Japanese lullaby. *Contra Mortem et Tempus* (CRI 768) is another kind of piece altogether. Written in the shadow of his son's death, this expressionistic atonal work is a portrait of juxtaposed fury and despair in the tradition of Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire*. As a virtual compendium of solo violin composition, Rochberg's monumental *Caprice Variations* of 1970 has become one of the most important works for violin in this century. Twenty-four of the fifty variations are found on vinyl in a spellbinding performance by Gidon Kremer (Deutsche Grammophone POL 640), and Michelle Makarski has included several movements in her 1997 CD *Caoine* (ECM New Music Series 1587). Rochberg's early reputation rested on his work as a serialist, and his twelve-tone 1952 *Bagatelles for Piano* are available in a collection of Rochberg piano music performed by Martha Thomas (ACA Digital Recording CM 20044). The 1961 serial second string quartet with soprano is available in two performances: CRI CD 769 and VoxBox CDX 5145. Both recordings are excellent, with different, yet very eloquent, performances by the sopranos Janice Harsanyi (on CRI) and Phyllis Bryn-Julson (on Vox).

As recently as ten years ago, most performances of new music were predictably dreary affairs. Each new piece would be introduced by an extended essay discussing its genesis, the cleverness of its pitch material permutations, or the method by which the music was randomly arrived at. But it never seemed to make much difference, since, aleatoric or completely serialized, it all sounded pretty much alike. If the emperor of new music wasn't quite naked, he at least had a very limited wardrobe.

But all that has changed now. Composition at the century's close is a celebration of distinctly individual visions: Tan Dun's combination of Peking Opera and bel canto, Michael Torke's pop-inspired ballets, John Tavener's Anglo-Byzantinisms, Paul Lansky's neo-Renaissance computer music, Christopher Rouse's expressionism, and the list goes on. While we may not appreciate a particular vision, and while all visions may not be realized with the same high artistry, it is heartening to see the view of artistic individuality, traditional in the West since at least the Middle Ages, again championed and valued. This renewed appreciation of artistic integrity and the prophetic role of the artist is very much the legacy of George Rochberg's revolt, and one for which we owe him our thanks.

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The Revenge of Conscience

J. Budziszewski

Things are getting worse very quickly now. The list of what we are required to approve is growing ever longer. Consider just the domain of sexual practice. First we were to approve sex before marriage, then without marriage, now against marriage. First with one, then with a series, now with a crowd. First with the other sex, then with the same. First between adults, then between children, then between adults and children. The last item has not been added yet, but will be soon: you can tell from the change in language, just as you can tell the approach of winter from the change in the color of leaves. As any sin passes through its stages from temptation, to toleration, to approval, its name is first euphemized, then avoided, then forgotten. A colleague tells me that some of his fellow legal scholars call child molestation "intergenerational intimacy": that's euphemism. A good-hearted editor tried to talk me out of using the term "sodomy": that's avoidance. My students don't know the word "fornication" at all: that's forgetfulness.

The pattern is repeated in the house of death. First we were to approve of killing unborn babies, then babies in process of birth; next came newborns with physical defects, now newborns in perfect health. Nobel-prize laureate James Watson proposes that parents of newborns be granted a grace period during which they may have their babies killed, and in 1994 a committee of the American Medical Association proposed harvesting organs from some sick babies even before they die. First we were to approve of suicide, then to approve of assisting it. Now we are to approve of a requirement to assist it, for, as Ernest van den Haag has argued, it is "unwarranted" for doctors not to kill patients who seek death. First we were to approve of killing the sick and unconscious, then of killing the conscious and consenting. Now we are to approve of killing the conscious and protesting, for in the United States, doctors starved and dehydrated stroke patient Marjorie Nighbert to death despite her pleading "I'm hungry," "I'm thirsty," "Please feed me," and "I want food." Such cases are only to be expected when food and water are now often classified as optional treatments rather than humane care; we have not long to go before joining the Netherlands, where involuntary euthanasia is common. Dutch physician and author Bert Keizer has described his response when a nursing home resident choked on her food: he shot her full of morphine and waited for her to die. Such a deed by a doctor in the land that resisted the Nazis.

Why do things get worse so fast? Of course we have names for the process, like "collapse," "decay," and "slippery slope." By conjuring images—a stricken house, a gangrenous limb, a sliding talus—they make us feel we understand. Now, I am no enemy to word-pictures, but a civilization is not really a house, a limb, or a heap of rocks; it cannot literally fall in, rot, or skid out from underfoot. Images can only illustrate an explanation; they cannot substitute for one. So why do things get worse so fast? It would be well to know, in case the process can be arrested.

The usual explanation is that conscience is weakened by neglect. Once a wrong is done, the next wrong comes more easily. On this view conscience is mainly a restraint, a resistance, a passive barrier. It doesn't so much drive us on as hold us back, and when persistently attacked, the restraining wall gets thinner and thinner and finally disappears. Often this explanation is combined with another: that conscience comes from culture, that it is built up in us from outside. In this view the heart is malleable. We don't clearly know what is right and wrong, and when our teachers change the lessons, our consciences change their contents. What once we deemed

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wrong, we deem right; what once we deemed right, we deem wrong.

There is something to these explanations, but neither can account for the sheer dynamism of wickedness—for the fact that we aren't gently wafted into the abyss but violently propel ourselves into it. Nor, as I will show, can either one account for the peculiar quality of our present moral confusion.

I suggest a different explanation. Conscience is not a passive barrier but an active force; though it can hold us back, it can also drive us on. Moreover, conscience comes not from without but from within: though culture can trim the fringes, the core cannot be changed. The reason things get worse so fast must somehow lie not in the weakness of conscience but in its strength, not in its shapelessness but in its shape.

II

Whether paradoxical or not, the view of conscience I defend is nothing new; its roots are ancient. In one of the tragedies of Sophocles, the woman Antigone seeks to give her dead brother a proper burial, but is forbidden by the king because her brother was an enemy of the state. She replies to the tyrant that there is another law higher than the state's, and that she will follow it because of its divine authority. Not even the king may require anyone to violate it. Moreover, it requires not only forbearance from evil but active pursuit of the good: in this case, doing the honors for her brother.

Antigone's claim that this higher law has divine authority can easily be misunderstood, because the Greeks did not have a tradition of verbal revelation. The mythical hero Perseus had never climbed any Mount Sinai; the fabled god Zeus had never announced any Ten Commandments. So, although the law of which Antigone speaks somehow has divine authority, she has not learned it by reading something like a Bible, with moral rules delivered by the gods. Nor is she merely voicing the customs of the tribe—at least not if we are to believe Aristotle, who seems a safer authority on the Greeks than our contemporary skeptics. Instead she seems to be speaking of principles that everyone with a normal mind knows by means of conscience. She seems to be speaking of a law written on the heart—of what philosophers would later call the natural law.

Now by contrast with the pagan Greeks, Jews and Christians do have a tradition of verbal revelation. Moses did climb the mountain, God did announce the commandments. One might think, then, that Jews and Christians wouldn't have a natural law tradition because they wouldn't need it. But just the opposite is true. The idea of a law written on the heart is far stronger and more consistent among Jews, and especially Christians, than it was among the pagans. In fact, the very phrase "law written on the heart" is biblical; it comes from the New Testament book of Romans. Judaism calls the natural law the Noahide Commandments because of a rabbinic legend that God had given certain general rules to all the descendants of Noah—that is, all human beings—long before he made His special covenant with the descendants of Abraham. In similar fashion, Christianity distinguishes between "general revelation," which every human being receives, and "special revelation," which is transmitted by witnesses and recorded only in the Bible. General revelation makes us aware of God's existence and requirements so that we can't help knowing that we have a problem with sin. Special revelation goes further by telling us how to solve that problem.

The natural law is unconsciously presupposed—even when consciously denied—by modern secular thinkers, too. We can see the presupposition at work whenever we listen in on ethical debate. Consider, for example, the secular ethic of utilitarianism, which holds that the morally right action is always the one that brings about the greatest possible total happiness. Arguments against utilitarianism by other secularists often proceed by showing that the doctrine yields conclusions contrary to our most deeply held moral intuitions. For instance, it isn't hard to imagine circumstances in which murdering an innocent man might make all the others much happier than they were before. Utilitarianism, seeking the greatest possible total happiness, would require us to murder the fellow; nevertheless we don't, because we perceive that murder is plain wrong. So instead of discarding the man, we discard the theory. Here is the point: such an argument against utilitarianism stakes everything on a pre-philosophical intuition about the heinousness of murder. Unless there is a law written on the heart, it is hard to imagine where this intuition comes from.

The best short summary of the traditional, natural law understanding of conscience was given by Thomas Aquinas when he said that the core principles of the moral law are the same for all "both as to rectitude and as to knowledge"—in other words, that they are not only right for all but known to all. Nor is it true, as some suppose, that he was referring only to such formal principles as "good is to be done," for he speaks for the greater part of the tradition when he expressly includes such precepts as "Honor thy father and thy mother," "Thou shalt not kill," and "Thou shalt not steal." These, he says, are matters which "the natural reason of every man, of its own accord and at once, judges to be done or not to be done." To be sure, not every moral principle is part of the core, but all moral principles are at least derived from it, if not by pure deduction (killing is wrong and poison kills, so poisoning is wrong), then with the help of prudence (wrongdoers should be punished, but the appropriate punishment depends on circumstances). Our knowledge of derived principles such as "Rise up before the hoary head" may be weakened by neglect and erased by culture, but our knowledge of

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the core principles is ineffaceable. These are the laws we can't not know.

Ranged against this view are two others. One simply denies that the core principles are right for all; the other admits they are right for all, but denies they are known to all. The former, of course, is relativism. I call the latter mere moral realism—with emphasis on "mere" because natural law is realistic, too, but more so.

Not much need be said here about relativism. It is not an explanation of our decline, but a symptom of it. The reason it cannot be an explanation is that it finds nothing to explain. To the question "Why do things get worse so fast?" it can only return "They don't get worse, only different."

Mere moral realism is a much more plausible opponent, because by admitting the moral law it acknowledges the problem. Things are getting worse quickly—plainly because there isn't anything we "can't not know." *Everything* in conscience can be weakened by neglect and erased by culture. Now if mere moral realists are right, then although the problem of moral decline may begin in volition, it dwells in cognition: it may begin as a defect of will, but ends as a defect of knowledge. We may have started by neglecting what we knew, but we have now gone so far that we really don't know it any more. What is the result? That our contemporary ignorance of right and wrong is genuine. We really don't know the truth, but we are honestly searching for it—trying to see on a foggy night—doing the best that we can. In a sense, we are blameless for our deeds, for we don't know any better.

All this sounds persuasive, yet it is precisely what the older tradition, the natural law tradition, denies. We do know better; we are not doing the best we can. The problem of moral decline is volitional, not cognitive; it has little to do with knowledge. By and large we do know right from wrong, but wish we didn't. We only make believe we are searching for truth—so that we can do wrong, condone wrong, or suppress our remorse for having done wrong in the past.

If the traditional view is true, then our decline is owed not to moral ignorance but to moral suppression. We aren't untutored, but "in denial." We don't lack moral knowledge; we hold it down.

III

Offhand it seems as though believing in a law we "can't not know" would make it harder, not easier, to explain why things are so quickly getting worse. If the moral law really is carved on the heart, wouldn't it be hard to ignore? On the other hand, if it is merely penciled in as the mere moral realists say—well!

But this is merely picture thinking again. Carving and penciling are but metaphors, and more than metaphors are necessary to show why the suppression of conscience is more violent and explosive than its mere weakening would be. First let us consider a few facts that ought to arouse our suspicion—facts about the precise kind of moral confusion we suffer, or say we suffer.

Consider this tissue of contradictions: Most who call abortion wrong call it killing. Most who call it killing say it kills a baby. Most who call it killing a baby decline to prohibit it altogether. Most who decline to prohibit it think it should be restricted. More and more people favor restrictions. Yet greater and greater numbers of people have had or have been involved in abortions.

Or this one: Most adults are worried about teenage sex. Yet rather than telling kids to wait until marriage, most tell kids to wait until they are "older," as we are. Most say that premarital sex between consenting adults is a normal expression of natural desires. Yet hardly any are comfortable telling anyone, especially their own children, how many people they have slept with themselves.

Or this one: Accessories to suicide often write about the act; they produce page after page to show why it is right. Yet a large part of what they write about is guilt. Author George E. Delury, jailed for poisoning and suffocating his wife, says in his written account of the affair that his guilt feelings were so strong they were "almost physical."

As to the first example, if abortion kills a baby then it ought to be banned to everyone; why allow it? But if it doesn't kill a baby it is hard to see why we should be uneasy about it at all; why restrict it? We restrict what we allow because we know it is wrong but don't want to give it up; we feed our hearts scraps in hopes of hushing them, as cooks quiet their kitchen puppies.

As to the second example, sexual promiscuity has exactly the same bad consequences among adults as it has among teenagers. But if it is just an innocent pleasure, then why not talk it up? Swinging is no longer a novelty; the sexual revolution is now gray with age. If shame persists, the only possible explanation is that guilt persists as well.

The third example speaks for itself. Delury calls the very strength of his feelings a proof that they did not express "moral" guilt, merely the "dissonance" resulting from violation of an instinctual block inherited from our primate ancestors. We might paraphrase his theory, "the stronger the guilt, the less it matters."

Clearly, whatever our problem may be, it isn't that conscience is weak. We may be confused, but we aren't confused that way. It isn't that we don't know the truth, but that we tell ourselves something different.

IV

If the law written on the heart can be repressed, then we cannot count on it to restrain us from doing wrong; that much is obvious. I have made the more paradoxical claim that repressing it hurls us into fur-

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ther wrong. Holding conscience down doesn't deprive it of its force; it merely distorts and redirects that force. We are speaking of something less like the erosion of an earthen dike so that it fails to hold the water back, than like the compression of a powerful spring so that it buckles to the side.

Here is how it works. Guilt, guilty knowledge, and guilty feelings are not the same thing; men and women can have the knowledge without the feelings, and they can have the feelings without the fact. Even when suppressed, however, the knowledge of guilt always produces certain objective needs, which make their own demand for satisfaction irrespective of the state of the feelings. These needs include confession, atonement, reconciliation, and justification.

Now when guilt is acknowledged, the guilty deed can be repented so that these four needs can be genuinely satisfied. But when the guilty knowledge is suppressed, they can only be displaced. That is what generates the impulse to further wrong. Taking the four needs one by one, let's see how this happens.

The need to confess arises from transgression against what we know, at some level, to be truth. I have already commented on the tendency of accessories to suicide to write about their acts. Besides George Delury, who killed his wife, we may mention Timothy E. Quill, who prescribed lethal pills for his patient, and Andrew Solomon, who participated in the death of his mother. Solomon, for instance, writes in the *New Yorker* that "the act of speaking or writing about your involvement is, inevitably, a plea for absolution." Many readers will remember the full-page signature advertisements feminists took out in the early days of the abortion movement, telling the world that they had killed their own unborn children. At first it seems baffling that the sacrament of confession can be inverted to serve the ends of advocacy. Only by recognizing the power of suppressed conscience can this paradox be understood.

The need to atone arises from the knowledge of a debt that must somehow be paid. One would think such knowledge would always lead directly to repentance, but the counselors whom I have interviewed tell a different story. One woman learned during her pregnancy that her husband had been unfaithful to her. He wanted the child, so to punish him for betrayal she had an abortion. The trauma of killing was even greater than the trauma of his treachery, because this time she was to blame. What was her response? She aborted the next child, too; in her words, "I wanted to be able to hate myself more for what I did to the first baby." By trying to atone without repenting, she was driven to repeat the sin.

The need for reconciliation arises from the fact that guilt cuts us off from God and man. Without repentance, intimacy must be simulated precisely by sharing with others in the guilty act. Leo Tolstoy knew this. In *Anna Karenina* there comes a time when the lovers' mutual guiltiness is their only remaining bond. But the phenomenon is hardly restricted to cases of marital infidelity. Andrew Solomon says that he, his brothers, and his father are united by the "weird legacy" of their implication in his mother's death, and quotes a nurse who participated in her own mother's death as telling him, "I know some people will have trouble with my saying this but it was the most intimate time I've ever had with anyone." Herbert Hendin comments in a book on the Dutch affair with euthanasia, "The feeling that participation in death permits an intimacy that they are otherwise unable to achieve permeates euthanasia stories and draws patients and doctors to euthanasia." And no wonder. Violation of a basic human bond is so terrible that the burdened conscience must instantly establish an abnormal one to compensate; the very gravity of the transgression invests the new bond with a sense of profound significance. Naturally some will find it attractive.

The reconciliation need has a public dimension, too. Isolated from the community of moral judgment, transgressors strive to gather a substitute around themselves. They don't sin privately; they recruit. The more ambitious among them go further. Refusing to go to the mountain, they require the mountain to come to them: society must be transformed so that it no longer stands in awful judgment. So it is that they change the laws, infiltrate the schools, and create intrusive social-welfare bureaucracies.

Finally we come to the need for justification, which requires more detailed attention. Unhooked from justice, justification becomes rationalization, which is a more dangerous game than it seems. The problem is that the ordinances written on the heart all hang together. They depend on each other in such a way that we cannot suppress one except by rearranging all the others. A few cases will be sufficient to show how this happens.

Consider sexual promiscuity. The official line is that modern people don't take sex outside marriage seriously any longer; mere moral realists say this is because we no longer realize the wrong of it. I maintain that we do know it is wrong but pretend that we don't. Of course one must be careful to distinguish between the core laws of sex, the ones we can't not know, and the derived ones, which we can not know. For example, though true and reasonable, the superiority of monogamous to polygamous marriage is probably not part of the core. On the other hand, no human society has ever held that the sexual powers may be exercised by anyone with anyone, and the recognized norm is a durable and culturally protected covenant between man and woman with the intention of procreation. Casual shack-ups and one-night stands don't qualify.

Because we can't not know that sex belongs with marriage, when we separate them we cover our guilty knowledge with rationalizations. In any particular

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culture, particular rationalizations may be just as strongly protected as marriage; the difference is that while the rationalizations vary from culture to culture, the core does not. At least in our culture, such sexual self-deceptions are more common among women than men. I don't think this is because the female conscience is stronger (or weaker) than the male. However, sex outside marriage exposes the woman to greater risk, so whereas the man must fool only his conscience, she must fool both her conscience and her self-interest. If she does insist on doing wrong, she has twice as much reason to rationalize.

One common rationalization is to say "No" while acting "Yes" in order to tell oneself afterward "I didn't go along." William Gairdner reports that according to one rape crisis counselor, many of the women who call her do so not to report that they have been raped, but to ask whether they were raped. If they have to ask, of course, they probably haven't been; they are merely dealing with their ambivalence by throwing the blame for their decisions on their partners. But this is a serious matter. Denial leads to the further wrong of false witness.

Another tactic is inventing private definitions of marriage. Quite a few people "think of themselves as married" although they have no covenant at all; some even fortify the delusion with "moving-in ceremonies" featuring happy words without promises. Unfortunately, people who "think of themselves as married" not only refuse the obligations of real marriage but demand all of its cultural privileges; because rationalization is so much work, they require other people to support them in it. Such demands make the cultural protection of real marriage more difficult.

Yet another ruse is to admit that sex belongs with marriage but to fudge the nature of the connection. By this reasoning I tell myself that sex is okay because I am going to marry my partner, because I want my partner to marry me, or because I have to find out if we could be happy married. An even more dangerous fudge is to divide the form of marriage from its substance—to say "we don't need promises because we're in love." The implication, of course, is that those who do need promises love impurely; that those who don't marry are more truly married than those who do.

This last rationalization is even more difficult to maintain than most. Love, after all, is a permanent and unqualified commitment to the true good of the other person, and the native tongue of commitment is precisely promises. To work, therefore, this ruse requires another: having deceived oneself about the nature of marriage, one must now deceive oneself about the nature of love. The usual way of doing so is to mix up love with the romantic feelings that characteristically accompany it, and call them "intimacy." If only we have these feelings, we tell ourselves, we may have sex. That is to say, we may have sex—if we feel like it.

Here is where things really become interesting, because if the criterion of being as-good-as-married is sexual feelings, then obviously nobody who has sexual feelings may be prevented from marrying. So homosexuals must also be able to "marry"; their unions, too, should have cultural protection. At this point suppressed conscience strikes another blow, reminding us that marriage is linked with procreation. But now we are in a box. We cannot say "therefore homosexuals cannot marry," because that would strike against the whole teetering structure of rationalizations. Therefore we decree that having been made marriageable, homosexuals must be made procreative; the barren field must seem to bloom. There is, after all, artificial insemination. And there is adoption. So it comes to pass that children are given as a right to those from whom they were once protected as a duty. The normalization of perversion is complete.

V

When ordinary rationalization fails, people revert to other modes of suppression. We often see this when an unmarried young woman becomes pregnant. Suddenly her conscience discovers itself; though she was not ashamed to lift her skirts, she is suddenly ashamed to show her swelling belly. What can she do? Well, she can have an abortion; she can revert to the mode of suppression called "getting rid of the evidence." Once again conscience multiplies transgressions. But she finds that the new transgression is no solution to the old one; in fact now she has something even more difficult to rationalize.

Think what is necessary to justify abortion. Because we can't not know that it is wrong to deliberately kill human beings, there are only four options. We must deny that the act is deliberate, deny that it kills, deny that its victims are human, or deny that wrong must not be done. The last option is literally nonsense. That something must not be done is what it means for it to be wrong; to deny that wrong may not be done is merely to say "wrong is not wrong," or "what must not be done may be done." The first option is hardly promising either. Abortion does not just happen; it must be performed. Its proponents not only admit there is a "choice," they boast of it. As to the second option, if it was ever promising, it is no longer. Millions of women have viewed sonograms of their babies kicking, sucking their thumbs, and turning somersaults; whatever these little ones are, they are busily alive. Even most feminists have given up calling the baby a "blood clot" or describing abortion as the "extraction of menses."

The only option even barely left is number three: to deny the humanity of the victims. It is at this point that the machinery slips out of control. For the only way to make option three work is to ignore biological nature, which tells us that from conception

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onward the child is as human as you or me (does anyone imagine that a dog is growing in there?)—and invent another criterion of humanity, one that makes it a matter of degree. Some of us must turn out more human, others less. This is a dicey business even for abortionists. It hardly needs to be said that no one has been able to come up with a criterion that makes babies in the womb less human but leaves everyone else as he was; the teeth of the moral gears are too finely set for that.

Consider, for instance, the criteria of "personhood" and "deliberative rationality." According to the former, one is more or less human according to whether he is more or less a person; according to the latter, he is more or less a person according to whether he is more or less able to act with mature and thoughtful purpose. Unborn babies turn out to be killable because they cannot act maturely; they are less than fully persons, and so less than fully human. In fact, they must be killed when the interests of those who are more fully human require it. Therefore, not only may their mothers abort, but it would be wrong to stop the mothers from doing so. But look where else this drives us. Doesn't maturity also fall short among children, teenagers, and many adults? Then aren't they also less than fully persons—and if less than fully persons, then less than fully humans? Clearly so, hence they too must yield to the interests of the more fully human; all that remains is to sort us all out. No, the progression is too extreme! People are not that logical! Ah, but they are more logical than they know; they are only logical slowly. The implication they do not grasp today they may grasp in thirty years; if they do not grasp it even then, their children will. It is happening already. Look around.

So conscience has its revenge. We can't not know the preciousness of human life—therefore, if we tell ourselves that humanity is a matter of degree, we can't help holding those who are more human more precious than those who are less. The urge to justify abortion drives us inexorably to a system of moral castes more pitiless than anything the East has devised. Of course we can fiddle with the grading criteria: consciousness, self-awareness, and contribution to society have been proposed; racial purity has been tried. No such tinkering avails to change the character of our deeds. If we will a caste system, then we shall have one; if we will that some shall have their way, then in time there shall be a nobility of Those Who Have Their Way. All that our fiddling with the criteria achieves is a rearrangement of the castes.

Need we wonder why, then, having started on our babies, we now want to kill our grandparents? Sin ramifies. It is fertile, fissiparous, and parasitic, always in search of new kingdoms to corrupt. It breeds. But just as a virus cannot reproduce except by commandeering the machinery of a cell, sin cannot reproduce except by taking over the machinery of conscience. Not a gear, not a wheel is destroyed, but they are all set turning in different directions than their wont. Evil must rationalize, and that is its weakness. But it can, and that is its strength.

VI

We've seen that although conscience works in everyone, it doesn't restrain everyone. In all of us some of the time, in some of us all of the time, its fearsome energy merely "multiplies transgressions." Bent backwards by denial, it is more likely to catalyze moral collapse than hold it back.

But conscience is not the only expression of the natural law in human nature. Thomas Aquinas defined law as a form of discipline that compels through fear of punishment. In the case of human law, punishment means suffering the civil consequences of violation; in the case of natural law it means suffering the natural consequences of violation. If I cut myself, I bleed. If I get drunk, I have a hangover. If I sleep with many women, I lose the power to care for anyone, and sow pregnancies, pain, and suspicion.

Unfortunately, the disciplinary effect of natural consequences is diminished in at least two ways. These two diminishers are the main reason why the discipline takes so long, so that the best that can be hoped for in most cultures is a pendulum swing between moral laxity and moral strictness.

The first diminisher is a simple time lag: not every consequence of violating the natural law strikes immediately. Some results make themselves felt only after several generations, and by that time people are so deeply sunk in denial that even more pain is necessary to bring them to their senses. A good example of a long-term consequence is the increase of venereal disease. When I was a boy we all knew about syphilis and gonorrhea, but because of penicillin they were supposed to be on the way out. Today the two horrors are becoming antibiotic-resistant, and AIDS, herpes, chlamydia, genital warts, human papilloma virus, and more than a dozen other sexually transmitted diseases, most of them formerly rare, are ravaging the population. Other long-term consequences of violating the laws of sex are poverty, because single women have no one to help them raise their children; crime, because boys grow into adolescence without a father's influence; and child abuse, because although spouses tend to greet babies with joy, live-ins tend to greet them with jealousy and resentment. Each generation is less able to maintain families than the one before. Truly the iniquities of the fathers—and mothers—are visited upon the children and the children's children to the third and fourth generation.

The second diminisher comes from us: "Dreaming of systems so perfect that no one will need to be good," we exert our ingenuity to escape from the natural consequences of breaking the natural law.

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Not all social practices have this effect. For instance, threatening drunk drivers with legal penalties supplements the discipline of natural consequences rather than undermining it. Nor is the effect always intended. We don't devise social insurance programs in order to encourage improvidence, though they do have this result. It isn't even always wrong. It would be abominable to refuse treatment to a lifelong smoker with emphysema, even though he may have been buoyed in his habit by the confidence that the doctors would save him. But to act with the *purpose* of compensating for immorality is always wrong, as when we set up secondary school clinics to dispense pills and condoms to teenagers.

Here is an axiom: We cannot alter human nature, physical, emotional, or spiritual. A corollary is that no matter how cleverly devised, our contrivances never do succeed in canceling out the natural consequences of breaking the natural law. At best they delay them, and for several reasons they can even make them worse. In the first place they alter incentives: People with ready access to pills and condoms see less reason to be abstinent. In the second place they encourage wishful thinking: Most people grossly exaggerate their effectiveness in preventing disease and pregnancy and completely ignore the risks. In the third place they reverse the force of example: Before long the practice of abstinence erodes even among people who don't take precautions. Finally they transform thought: Members of the contraceptive culture think liberty from the natural consequences of their decisions is somehow owed to them.

There comes a time when even the law shares their view. In *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*, which reauthorized the private use of lethal violence against life in the womb, the Supreme Court admitted that its original abortion ruling might have been wrong, but upheld it anyway. As it explained, "For two decades of economic and social developments, people have organized their intimate relationships and made choices that define their views of themselves and their places in society in reliance on the availability of abortion in the event that contraception should fail. . . . An entire generation has come of age free to assume [this] concept of liberty." To put the thought more simply, what we did has separated sex from responsibility for resulting life for so long that to change the rules on people now would be unfair.

Naught avails; our efforts to thwart the law of natural consequences merely make the penalty more crushing when it comes. The only question is whether our culture will be able to survive the return stroke of the piston.

To survive what is bearing down on us, we must learn four hard lessons: to acknowledge the natural law as a true and universal morality; to be on guard against our own attempts to overwrite it with new laws that are really rationalizations for wrong; to fear the natural consequences of its violation, recognizing their inexorability; and to forbear from all further attempts to compensate for immorality, returning on the path that brought us to this place.

Unfortunately, the condition of human beings since before recorded history is that we don't want to learn hard lessons. We would rather remain in denial. What power can break through such a barrier?

The only Power that ever has. Thomas Aquinas writes that when a nation suffers tyranny, those who enthroned the tyrant may first try to remove him, then call upon the emperor for help. When these human means fail, they should consider their sins and pray. We are now so thoroughly under the tyranny of our vices that it would be difficult for us to recognize an external tyrant at all. By our own hands we enthroned them: our strength no longer suffices for their removal: they have suspended the senate of right reason and the assembly of the virtues: the emperor, our will, is held hostage: and it is time to pray.

Nothing new can be written on the heart, but nothing needs to be; all we need is the grace of God to see what is already there. We don't want to read the letters, because they burn; but they do burn, so at last we must read them. This is why the nation can repent. This is why the plague can be arrested. This is why the culture of death can be redeemed. "For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before thee . . . a broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." FT

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United Methodists at the End of the Mainline

William J. Abraham

The United Methodist Church stands at a critical moment. Founded in 1968 at a time of ecumenical enthusiasm and euphoria, it now harbors within it forces that threaten to destroy it as a single body. Those forces did not arise overnight; indeed they stretch back into the parent bodies that merged to form United Methodism. Three groups, the liberals, radicals, and conservatives, are finding their uneasy compromise difficult to maintain.

It has long been agreed that United Methodism is a coalition of diverse conviction and opinion, having been formed under the banner of theological pluralism. Church leaders took the view in the 1970s that the core identity of United Methodism, if there was one at all, was located in commitment to the Methodist Quadrilateral (Scripture, tradition, reason, and experience), and that this not only permitted but in fact sanctioned and fostered doctrinal pluralism.

Doctrinal pluralism, despite its intellectual incoherence, will work so long as something akin to Liberal Protestantism is held by the leadership of the church and so long as those who are not Liberal Protestants acquiesce. In fact pluralism is part of the intellectual structure of Liberal Protestantism. If you believe that Christian doctrine is essentially an attempt to capture dimensions of human experience that defy precise expression in language because of personal and cultural limitations, then the truth about God, the human condition, salvation, and the like can never be adequately posited once and for all; on the contrary, the church must express ever and anew its experience of the divine as mediated through Jesus Christ. The church becomes a kind of eternal seminar whose standard texts keep changing and whose conversation never ends. In these circumstances pluralism is an inescapable feature of the church's life. Pluralism effectively prevents the emergence of Christian doctrinal confession, that is, agreed Christian conviction and truth; and it creates the psychological and social conditions for constant self-criticism and review.

The incoherence of this position is not difficult to discern, despite its initial plausibility. On its own terms it cannot tolerate, for example, those who believe that there really is a definitive revelation of the divine, that the church really can discern and express the truth about God through the working of reason and the Holy Spirit, and that such truth is necessary for effective mission and service. Hence pluralism is by nature exclusionary. Thus it is no surprise that pluralists readily desert their pluralism in their vehement opposition to certain kinds of classical and conservative theology.

Pluralism is at once absolutist and relativist. It is absolutely committed to the negative doctrine that there is no divine revelation that delivers genuine knowledge of God; it is absolutely committed to a radically apophatic conception of Christian theology, so that no human language or concept, no product of reason at all, can adequately express the mystery of the divine; and it is absolutely committed to using theology to articulate Christian doctrine given the needs and idiom of the day. But it is relativist in its vision of what constitutes the material content of Christian doctrine at any point in history. Doctrine for the pluralists is the expression of Christian teaching as worked out by some appropriate theology and expressed in terms adequate to the culture of the day. To them, Christian tradition constitutes a series of landmark expressions of the faith which are worth exploring, but which must change

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to incorporate new insights and new truth. On this analysis tradition is seen to be a relatively benign, if not strictly binding, phenomenon.

More recently, however, a very different attitude to the church's tradition has emerged. There is now abroad in theology a form of Radical Protestantism which constitutes a whole new vision of Christian faith and existence. Its proponents claim that the tradition is dominated by patriarchy and exclusion, the product of oppressive forces linked to geographical location, social class, race, and gender. It is not to be tolerated, but stamped out and destroyed. Nobody, at least in public, would be prepared to state the matter that bluntly, but that is the truth of the matter.

Like the liberals, the radicals are both absolutists and relativists, but about different matters. They absolutize a commitment to liberation, emancipation, and empowerment. Equally absolute is the privileged position of designated victims of oppression. In some radical circles we can detect that a working doctrine of divine revelation has crept back into their discourse, where certain experiences of oppression and liberation are taken as epiphanies or as visible signs of the reign of God, and anything that questions the truth embedded in these experiences must be suppressed. On the other hand, radicals insist, we should not suppress the diverse convictions, ideologies, theories, and discourses of the new included groups. They become the real focus of pluralism as we try to foster different voices, experiences, readings, and proposals within the carefully circumscribed boundaries.

Within intellectual circles in United Methodism these developments have caused some consternation. Many of the great Liberal Protestant teachers of the tradition in the last generation have become disillusioned by the loss of their cherished conceptions of critical inquiry, courtesy, and academic standards. They are undergoing a mixed sense of despair, betrayal, and alienation. Their ideas of objective scholarship have been overtaken by forms of engaged or committed scholarship which they see as a mixture of radical subjectivism and political manipulation. A fertile few have managed to find a way to take on board some of the new theories without jettisoning the deep structure of their position, but the general sense is one of weariness and deep loss.

Recently, divisions that had only surfaced in academic discussions have begun to move out into the wider church. Significant numbers of women clergy now see opposition to their intellectual positions as ineradicably linked to right-wing Christianity or as inextricably tied to a backlash on the part of white male members in the church. This is entirely in keeping with the underlying convictions about knowledge and power that animate much of the new trend in theology.

These developments are a genuinely new arrival within the borders of United Methodism. This is not, of course, the first time that there has been a changing of the academic guard; but this time we have something more, an intentional political edge that does not permit it to be contained within the standard liberal language of tolerance and civility. "Engaged scholarship" brings into the heart of the discussion considerations related to emotion, commitment, personal identity, subjective reception, and radical enactment in the public arena. There is in fact a missionary dimension that drives its adherents to transform the church and the world. In this respect the new orthodoxy is very much like earlier forms of orthodoxy that sought to serve the church from within a very particular confessional stance. There is also a concomitant concern to link knowledge and action and to relate action to vital spirituality.

Many fine pastors, theologians, and administrators, people who have given a generation of service to the church and who are committed to a small core of Christological conviction surrounded by a very flexible outer ring of conviction, still imagine that things are much the same as they were when they were in seminary. Such leaders have been able to survive intellectually by folding the reigning diversity and pluralism into their conviction that Jesus really is the Son of God and the teacher and savior of the world. Their motto could be summed up: "Stick closely to Christ and leave the rest to God and human history." This is an inadequate body of doctrine for the long haul of history, but it has served a whole generation remarkably well. Although they are aware that the intellectual landmarks are changing, they find it difficult to believe that the basic commitment to civility, relevant evidence, and respect for the tradition of the church across the ages might be overtaken by a very different vision of the church. Yet it is only a matter of time before the changes identified above will force themselves upon these leaders.

To round out this contemporary portrait of the United Methodist Church, something needs to be said about conservative or classical Methodists. It is this group, often identified in secularist fashion as the right wing of the denomination, that is accused of splitting the church.

This charge is puzzling in the extreme, for the practice of even the hard-line conservatives has been anything but schismatic. Rather than pull out, they have opted over many years to stay in and work for renewal. Indeed, most conservatives within United Methodism are instinctively oriented to renewal rather than schism. Those committed to schism have already left and gone elsewhere. The conservative wing of the church is itself a fragile coalition, including those who lean in a catholic direction, those who are card-carrying charismatics, those inclined in an Anabaptist direction, and those who are really pragmatists at heart but for the moment lean to conser-

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vatism out of convenience and traditional piety. Those who believe that there is some kind of conspiracy afoot to pull out and form a new church overlook these differences among conservatives, and underestimate the difficulty of bringing them all together. The coalition holds together informally for the most part because of the perceived threat to the integrity and continuity of the Methodist tradition. Take away that threat and the inner divisions within the conservative wing of the church will quickly become visible.

Three additional considerations are pivotal for understanding the current mood among conservatives. First, they have been reasonably effective at the local level; in some cases their success in growing local churches has been spectacular. This has kept them busy and enabled them to ignore those features of the larger church that disturb them. Secondly, they have become more organized politically within the church as a whole. Though still at the margins, they now have to be reckoned with seriously. Thirdly, a network of highly educated conservative academics has begun something of a renaissance of classical Wesleyanism. The development of such a network opens the way for a deeper renewal, looking to issues of principle that would otherwise be ignored and to articulating a more forceful diagnosis of the situation in the church.

Schismatic activity would involve conservatives abandoning their own principles. There are few more telling pieces on the evils of schism and its consequences than that provided by the founder of Methodism, John Wesley. (The irony of Wesley's own position will not, however, be lost on the perceptive reader, for Wesley made this attack on parties within the church all the while he was organizing one of the most effective renewal movements that Anglicanism had seen.)

Consider the following comments:

> As . . . separation is evil in itself, being a breach of brotherly love, so it brings forth evil fruit; it is naturally productive of the most mischievous consequences. It opens a door to all unkind tempers, both in ourselves and others. It leads directly to a whole train of evil surmisings, to severe and uncharitable judging of each other. It gives occasion to offense, to anger, and to resentment, perhaps in ourselves as well as in our brethren, which if not presently stopped, may issue in bitterness, malice, and settled hatred, creating a present hell wherever they are found, as a prelude to hell eternal.

Wesley provides a graphic catalogue of woes that follow from division and schism. Evil tempers lead to evil actions, which in turn lead some Christians to abandon the faith and put their eternal salvation at risk. Offense is given to the Holy Spirit, holiness is quenched, and evangelism suffers, for outsiders see no point in becoming Christian. Ultimately both the power and the very form of religion are destroyed. Even a cursory reading of Wesley is an antidote to any thought of schism in the church.

Despite these features of conservative Methodism, others still fear it as a source of division in the church, and perhaps understandably so. A new brand of conservative is emerging who is arguing that United Methodism really does have a substantial doctrine to which the tradition has been and should be committed. Non-conservative United Methodists instinctively fear that such a perspective will divide the church because it involves the marking of boundaries between those who are in and those who are out. In short, critics are relying on the old slogan that doctrine divides while experience unites. The insistence that United Methodism is a confessional church, a central claim of most conservatives, threatens the commitment to pluralism, diversity, and inclusiveness of the last generation of United Methodists. Here we have reached the nub of the charge, for abandoning pluralism and accepting diversity only within agreed boundaries does indeed represent a significant departure from the unstable orthodoxy that has been in vogue for so long.

Yet even this move on the part of conservatives need not lead to schism. On the contrary, those pressing this reorientation have done exactly what those committed to pluralism did a generation ago. They have worked out a careful account of the United Methodist tradition that rivals the prevailing one. They have proposed a deep conversation on the doctrinal identity of United Methodism, and they have insisted that any debate that emerges be conducted in a serious and civilized fashion. Moreover, they readily acknowledge that proposed legislative and other changes, if needed, should be carried out within the corridors and courts of the church in a rational and fair manner. Liberal Protestants should grasp the value of such an approach immediately. It is an open question whether they will actually do so, or whether they will join with Radical Protestants in dismissing this whole exercise as a cover for ideology and a quest for power.

In light of all these considerations, it is quite remarkable that United Methodism has been able to hang together for so long. While other factors are clearly involved, we have been fortunate to have had a cadre of Liberal Protestants who have been able to lead (albeit in a way that has exasperated both conservatives and radicals), and to have had a strong commitment on the part of conservatives to stay on board and work for renewal. However, as I have noted, this is now in the process of disintegrating, and it is the liberal commitment to pluralism that is giving way. Pluralism, much as it continues to be prized among liberals, is a self-destructive notion

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rejected by both radicals and conservatives. It is an inherently unstable arrangement that cannot survive either the force of logic or the march of events.

We are facing, then, the breakdown of a working consensus, and it is not difficult to imagine what it would take to complete the break. A headstrong figure, the theological and ecclesiastical equivalent of a Ross Perot, might emerge and insist that the whole church follow his way or die. A significant group of bishops could manage to develop an agenda deeply at odds with prevailing circumstances. Some large bodies, or jurisdictions, might become so alienated from the leadership of the church and so upset about funding policies in key areas that they decide to withhold all contributions to the Connection, the governing body of United Methodism.

Suppose there emerged from left or right an issue of moral commitment over which the diverse movements in the church could agree that churchwide action must be taken but could not agree on what action to take. Suppose, further, that this issue was logically related to matters of principle at a deeper level, so that one could not commit oneself on this issue without also making significant commitments about the internal logic and character of the tradition as a whole. Suppose, still further, that those demanding action intended to use not just argument and rhetoric but activist demonstration to secure their ends. Suppose, finally, that they were to form a community of local churches and other entities within United Methodism that both expressed their moral convictions and worked assiduously for the practical adoption of their agenda. If such a scenario were to develop, then there can be no doubting that the community would be ripe for outright schism.

It does not take a rocket scientist to work out what the relevant scenario actually is. Like all mainline Protestant denominations, United Methodism finds itself challenged on its traditional position on sexual morality by the emergence of the conscientious conviction that gay and lesbian relationships are a legitimate expression of God's good and diverse creation. Revisionists are sufficiently agitated by the righteousness of their cause that they deem it essential to make use of both rational and nonrational means to win over the church as whole. More than a decade ago they took the important step of institutionalizing their position across the denomination.

There is a deep and unintended irony in this development. The theology driving the conscience of change is one that is deeply committed to inclusivism. In this theology gay and lesbian Christians have the same status earlier attributed to slaves and currently attributed to women, the status of those excluded from the traditional church. The clear aim is to include this new minority within the church, but the effect is to drive out those opposed to legitimizing homosexuality. Because they see themselves as agents of reconciliation and unity, the revisionists have difficulty seeing that their position is in effect exclusionary.

Awareness of this paradox may do little to alter the way things will turn out. Perceptive revisionists can see this, and they face a difficult dilemma. One prominent pastor personally committed to the position of the revisionists stated in a pastoral letter to his congregation that were the revisionists successful, those opposed to the legitimization of homosexuality would be forced to make a painful decision: they could either remain within a church that would stand for an agenda they found incompatible with obedience to Christ, or they could leave the church. "On an issue on which the whole body of believers finds so many unresolvable questions, I find it unacceptable to force a large number of our members to face this dilemma."

This is a refreshing acknowledgment of the matter. Equally refreshing in its honesty is the following comment of a senior pastor of a Reconciling (i.e., revisionist) congregation.

> Now it is our turn to get honest. Although the creeds of our denomination pay lip service to the idea that Scripture is "authoritative" and "sufficient for faith and practice," many of us have moved far beyond that notion in our theological thinking. We are only deceiving ourselves—and lying to our evangelical brothers and sisters—when we deny the shift we have made.
>
> We have moved beyond Luther's *sola Scriptura* for the same reason the Catholic Church moved beyond the canonized Scriptures after the fourth century. We recognize that understandings of situations change. "New occasions teach new duties." We have moved far beyond the idea that the Bible is exclusively normative and literally authoritative for our faith. To my thinking, that is good! What is bad is that we have tried to con ourselves and others by saying "we haven't changed our position."
>
> Furthermore, few of us retain belief in Christ as the sole way of salvation. We trust that God can work under many other names and in many other forms to save people. Our views *have* changed over the years.

Such an admission makes clear that more is at stake on this issue than a new moral judgment of homosexuality. What is at stake are issues of principle—the role of revelation and Scripture in the formation of conscience—that affect matters of doctrine ranging from the place of the Methodist Quadrilateral in the formation of United Methodist identity to the place of Christ in salvation.

The dilemma for the conservatives, forced upon them by the attack against traditional teachings, is simple: they perceive their position to be essential to Christianity, so they cannot see it abandoned and retain loyalty to what is left.

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Not surprisingly, we can look to the founder of Methodism for guidance. John Wesley recognized that not all internal disputes within the church could be traced back to bad faith or lack of love. Some were matters of conscience. Speaking of his relationship to his beloved Church of England, he wrote:

> I am now, and have been from my youth, a member and a minister of the Church of England. And I have no desire nor design to separate from it till my soul separates from my body. Yet if I was not permitted to remain therein without omitting what God requires me to do, it would then become meet, and right, and my bounden duty to separate from it without delay. To be more particular, I know God has committed to me a dispensation of the gospel. Yea, and my own salvation depends upon preaching it: "Woe is me if I preach not the gospel." If then I could not remain in the church without omitting this, without desisting from the gospel, I should be under a necessity of separating from it, or losing my own soul. In like manner, if I could not continue to unite with any smaller society, church, or body of Christians, without committing sin, without lying and hypocrisy, without preaching to other doctrines which I did not myself believe, I should be under an absolute necessity of separating from that society. And in all these cases the sin of separation, with all the evils consequent upon it, would not lie upon me, but upon those who constrained me to make that separation by requiring of me such terms of communion as I could not in conscience comply with.

This is a sobering admonition. Given that it appears within the canonical heritage of United Methodism, it is worth asking whether what it portends can be forestalled. How might division be avoided? We can think of several possibilities, all of them unlikely.

Perhaps there will be decisive new evidence or a fresh interpretation of the available doctrinal and empirical data that will lead one side to convert the other, thereby salvaging unity. This is a very unlikely possibility, for it is implausible to think that radically new evidence will emerge, or that a significantly new reordering of current data will be advanced. The standard lines are well known and unlikely to change.

Perhaps someone with the stature and wisdom of Solomon will emerge and find a way to develop a framework in which both sides could accept each other within an agreed consensus. This is an unlikely scenario for at least two reasons. First, the church as a whole has experimented at length with this very option in its commitment to doctrinal pluralism. As I have repeatedly argued, this is an incoherent and unstable arrangement that is now falling apart. Second, the tradition is too big and too full of parties, caucuses, movements, and organizations to permit such a person emerging on a national scale. The same logic applies to the possibility of concerted effort on the part of the Council of Bishops—the bishops themselves are deeply divided on the relevant issues and have now expressed that division in public.

Perhaps the revisionists will come to acknowledge the consequences of their position and withdraw either to form a new church or to join a church that advocates their position. This too is unlikely.

The revisionists do not present a monolithic front. In fact one of the most interesting features of the revisionist position is that it can harbor both liberals and radicals, a feat of significant proportions given the tension between these two groups. The revisionist position spans the field from those who might entertain second thoughts about their position all the way to those who are absolutely convinced that revision is demanded by the gospel, stems from the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and represents appropriate prophetic action in the current generation. Some of the latter also take the view that all opposition to their cause is prompted by bigotry, intolerance of minorities, and ignorance. Many of them believe that their cause is as correct as that of opposition to slavery and of the opening of ordination to women. Given these sorts of convictions, it is most unlikely that the revisionists will discontinue pursuing their aims within the church.

What then is likely to happen? Initially, much will depend on the speed of developments in the deliberations and actions of three major constituencies within the church: the liberal institutionalists, the racial and ethnic minorities, and the conservatives.

The institutionalists are concerned less with the rightness or wrongness of homosexuality and related issues than with the future of the denomination. Their natural reaction to the church's dilemma is a mixture of anger, distress, irritation, and fear. They would dearly love not to address the issues at all, to muddle through as best they can, and to stay clear of all talk of division and schism. Their heads may well be with the conservatives, but their hearts are with the revisionists—hence they find themselves inwardly torn. They especially fear any discussion that goes to the principles of the tradition, preferring to live as best as they can with whatever compromise is worked out. The time for decision for this group will come when they must enact the practices of the revisionists in their local churches. At that point their heads must win out over their hearts if a schism is to be avoided.

The minority groups—African Americans, Hispanic Americans, and Asian Americans—will also be crucial for future developments. In this case there will be even greater reluctance to side with the conser-

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vatives in the church. In the past, these groups have perceived conservatives to be suspect on racism, while on the other hand they worked with liberals in the fight for civil rights, and several of their theological heroes are crucial forerunners if not advocates of radicalism. Their natural alliance would seem to be with the revisionists. Yet much of the theological and liturgical content of the African American, Hispanic, and Asian American traditions is in fact deeply conservative and orthodox. It is, therefore, very possible that the leaders of these traditions could break with their earlier alliances and move in a significantly different direction.

Finally, there are the conservatives. Some of them will undoubtedly take an aggressive line, resorting to legislative action, mass mailings, letter-writing campaigns, verbal agitation, and the like. This is all the more likely in light of the recent narrow acquittal by a church tribunal of a pastor on the charges that he violated church law by performing a wedding ceremony for two lesbian members of his Omaha, Nebraska, congregation.

Other conservatives, those who would gladly identify themselves as moderates, traditionalists, or centrists, may well be glad that there are more radical conservatives around to raise the issues, but they are extremely nervous about any kind of drastic action. Tempted perhaps to take the line adopted by institutionalists, they will bide their time hoping that the crash never comes.

In the short term we need some way to hold off precipitous actions on the homosexual issue that will lead to the division of the church. But it is clear that homosexuality is but one of a number of potentially church-dividing issues. In the long term we need to stimulate conversation toward the emergence of a new theological consensus that might command the allegiance of a majority in the church at large.

However this important conversation continues, and it surely will continue, it must be informed by the very real possibility that the Liberal Protestant project exemplified by United Methodism was flawed from the start. Perhaps the very idea of theological pluralism was bound to self-destruct in time. These are the ominous questions now engaged. The truth and the church we love deserve from parties on all sides of these questions clear thinking, honest speaking, mutual respect—and much prayer and fasting. FT

Open

Psalm 81

What the God of Jacob said through Joseph, we sing
In a psalm, accompanied by tambourine and shepherd's harp.
  New moon, full moon, blow the horn of Israel
    Again. About the law:

When I sent Joseph down to Egypt
  (Strange tongues spoken there)
I took his brothers off his shoulders,
  Saved him from the chore pots.
  He called, I answered him
With dreams. I answer you with thunder:
  Split rocks gush bitter water.

  Do not worship strangeness
In yourself or others' glamour:
I led you out of Egypt, and will
  Fill your mouth. Just open
When I speak: but no one listens.

Had they not loved the sound of their own voices,
  Chosen lust, and meat, and hate,
I would have made them masters over all they met,
Would have fed them white bread milled from finest wheat,
  Spread with honey from the rock.

Laurance Wieder

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Must the Truth Offend?

An Exchange

Jerry L. Walls

J. A. Di Noia began his article on "Jesus and the World Religions" (FT, June/July 1995) by describing his experience on a panel assigned to discuss the question of whether Jesus Christ is the unique mediator of salvation. After noting that his fellow Catholic theologians were reluctant to affirm this claim, he observed that this was motivated by a desire to avoid giving offense to adherents of other religious traditions.

The remainder of his article is devoted to showing that true Christian universalism requires defending the unique role of Jesus in salvation, and that, properly understood, followers of other religions have no reason to take offense at this, since the Christian notion of salvation is fundamentally different from that of other religions. Salvation in Christianity aims at eternal communion with the Trinity, a communion in which our individual identity is maintained and fulfilled. This is markedly different from, say, the Buddhist goal of Nirvana, where individual identity is extinguished.

Recognizing this fact has important implications with respect to the claims believers make for their various traditions. As Di Noia notes, a Christian need not feel anxious if informed by his Buddhist friend that he cannot attain Nirvana except by following the Excellent Eightfold Path. If this is true, and if he does not pursue the Path, it follows he may never reach Nirvana. But, Di Noia continues, "since I have as yet no desire to attain and enjoy Nirvana, I am not offended by this reasoning. I have not been persuaded that Nirvana is what I should be seeking." In the same vein, Di Noia quotes the revealing remark a rabbi once made to him: "Jesus Christ is the answer to a question I have never asked."

The upshot of this is that Jesus can be recognized as the unique mediator of salvation as Christianity conceives it. However, not all persons apparently desire such salvation, so it is not offensive to insist that Jesus is the necessary means to it. This can be as readily granted as the fact that one must cross the ocean to get to Britain from the United States. This will not bother those whose aim is to go to Brazil or Chile.

Di Noia's main argument is surely sound. Christianity offers a distinctive account of salvation, and not everyone who is religious shares the Christian hope of eternal communion with the Trinity. He is mistaken, however, to advance this point as a way for different religions to avoid giving offense by claims of uniqueness. The difficulty is suggested by his comment that "I have not been persuaded that Nirvana is what I should be seeking." For the issue is precisely that from a Christian standpoint, there are some things that all persons *should* be seeking.

To bring this point into focus, let us reflect on the Christian claim that Jesus is the only way to communion with the Trinity. Since Christians claim there is only one God and that God is the Trinity, it follows from Christian premises that those who do not want eternal communion with the Trinity do not want an eternal relationship with the only God there is. Now this has serious consequences when we also consider that such a relationship is, from the Christian standpoint, the highest good for which all persons were created, indeed the only good that can finally answer the human longing for happiness and satisfaction.

Consider the implications of this for the Buddhist who desires extinction or the rabbi who says Jesus is the answer to a question he has never asked. The Christian cannot avoid the conclusion that the Buddhist *should* desire eternal communion with God, and that the rabbi *should* be asking the questions for which Jesus is the answer. If they do not, then either they misunderstand Christianity or they do not will what God wills for them. And if the Christian declares that non-Christians do not will what God wills for them, he makes a judgment that must inevitably be offensive. In fact, any basic religious disagreement entails the judgment that at least one of the parties must be resisting the will of God in a way

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for which he is morally culpable.

The claim that at least one of the parties must be morally culpable is not intended as a simple empirical observation. That is, it does not imply overt immoral behavior on the part of either party. The claim is rather a statement about the logic of fundamental religious disagreement when at least one of the religions involved is exclusive in nature. It must apply to basic disputes between Jews, Christians, Muslims, or any other exclusive religion.

Let us define an exclusive religion as one that believes its claims are exclusively true at those points where they are incompatible with the claims of other religions. It does not follow from this, of course, that other religions are completely false or that all adherents of such religions are lost. A Christian exclusivist, for instance, might hold that such adherents could be saved were they willing to accept Christ when truly and fairly informed about him.

To illustrate the nature of a fundamental religious disagreement, let us consider such a point of dispute between the great theistic religions. An obvious candidate to bring the issue into clear focus is the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation, the doctrine that Jesus was the Son of God in the flesh, the Messiah promised in the Old Testament, and God's ultimate revelation. Now presumably all parties involved agree that this claim is either true or false and that it cannot be both. Indeed, orthodox Christians insist that it is true, while adherents of the other theistic religions insist that it is not.

This dispute is significant only if at least one of the parties presses its claims as objective truth. If both sides claim their position is true only for their particular community, the dispute is dissolved. But most traditional theistic believers have recognized their traditions as making truth claims that exclude incompatible ones.

Now perhaps we are in a position to understand more fully why moral offense is inevitable in fundamental religious disputes. Our example focuses on whether the Incarnation is true or false. But there is more involved. And it has to do with the further point that a negative implication follows for Christians if the doctrine of the Incarnation is not true, whereas a negative implication follows for properly informed adherents of other religions if it is true. And since the doctrine of Incarnation is either true or false, one of these negative implications is true.

Before spelling this out, let us make the more general point that if something is true and has been shown to be so in a sufficiently clear way, that accounts for why those who believe it do so. In such a case, one does not question those who believe it or in any way doubt their motives for so doing.

Matters are altogether different, however, when we are dealing with false beliefs. It is only natural to wonder why such beliefs are held. This is especially so if the belief in question is evidently false or if something of considerable significance rides on it. If the people who hold this false belief insist that it is very important, it becomes urgent for us to explain why they are so grossly mistaken.

Now this is just the sort of case we have if the doctrine of the Incarnation is not true. For Christians have traditionally made very strong claims about the importance of believing in the Incarnation. But let us suppose now that it is not true that Jesus is the Son of God incarnate. The question we must ask is, what could explain or motivate such a profoundly mistaken claim?

One possible answer would be injudicious zeal and enthusiasm. In this case, the persons who made these claims would be sincere, but badly mistaken in their judgments. Perhaps they have had their beliefs instilled in them since they were very young, and given their narrow background, they could hardly be expected to believe otherwise. Their claims could then be patronizingly dismissed as the product of ignorance or naivete.

But suppose that many of the people advancing the claims cannot plausibly be written off as ignorant or naive. Here, one may resort to critical judgments of another sort. One might, for instance, propose that the proponents of the claims are mentally or psychologically imbalanced. But while this explanation may apply to some, it is unlikely it will plausibly account for all the persons who make the controverted claims.

In this case, an even more severe judgment is available, namely, a moral one. That is, one might conclude that the persons who make these claims are motivated by resentment, anger, envy, or arrogance. So the Christians who hold that all those who ultimately and decisively reject Jesus as the Son of God are damned would do so as a way of lashing out against those who reject their religion. It is a way of getting even, or of trying to control those who disagree with them. If Jesus is not the Son of God incarnate, how else can we account for the passion with which Christians have insisted that he is and have preached terrible fates for those who do not likewise believe? This is a claim of such monumental significance that some reasonable account must be given for why it is so seriously believed and preached.

Suppose, on the other hand, that the doctrine of the Incarnation is true as Christians claim it is. If so, then it is known through revelation. More specifically, it was revealed through a series of remarkable events that early Christians saw as the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. Indeed, the Incarnation has been recognized by Christian theologians as God's ultimate word to us, the climax of revelation. This word is the key to understanding all previous revelation. In one of his epigrams Pascal remarked: "The prophecies were ambiguous; they are so no longer."

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This is not to say that it was altogether obvious that the life of Jesus fulfilled prophecy. Rather, the Gospels make it clear that the disciples did not recognize the fulfillment of prophecy until after the resurrection. For instance, the Gospel of John reports that the disciples did not recognize the "triumphal entry" as such until after the resurrection. It was in retrospect that they realized that the prophecy of Zechariah applied to that event. And in the Gospel of Luke, the disciples need a Bible study from the risen Jesus to understand the events of Holy Week as the fulfillment of the Old Testament. Pascal elaborated more generally that "The prophecies, even the miracles and proofs of our religion, are not of such a kind that they can be said to be absolutely convincing. . . . But the evidence is such as to exceed, or at least equal, the evidence to the contrary, so that it cannot be reason that decides us against following it, and can therefore only be concupiscence and wickedness of heart."

Notice that Pascal is somewhat ambiguous about the power of the evidence for Christianity. He is certain, however, that it is sufficiently clear to support belief for anyone whose heart is rightly disposed. God surely would not reveal a truth of the magnitude of the Incarnation without doing so in an optimal manner. It may not be revealed in the manner we would judge most appropriate or with the degree of clarity we would desire. But a loving and wise God would surely reveal it in the way best suited to elicit the sort of response He desires from persons who are morally free as well as rational. Given a revelation that is sufficiently clear in this sense, I think an analysis similar to the one above follows. Those who do not believe are either ignorant, naive, psychologically impaired in some fashion, or dubiously motivated.

Pascal altogether ignores factors such as ignorance and concludes that unbelief must be accounted for in terms of "wickedness of heart." Presumably he would be willing to grant that some unbelief could be explained as due to faulty information, inaccurate perceptions of what Christianity teaches, and the like. Ultimately, however, not all unbelief can be explained in this way. And unless all unbelievers are misinformed, psychologically impaired, or naive—a suggestion probably offensive in itself—then at least some forms of unbelief, deliberately taken, must be due to "wickedness of heart." Again, the wickedness involved is not necessarily a matter of overt behavior, but of resisting the will of God.

It is the magnitude of the claims involved that require this conclusion. Certainly not every religious or theological dispute implies such a radical parting of the ways. Consider, for example, some of the relatively arcane debates that have raged about the proper way to construe the divine attributes. The debate about God's relation to time is a case in point. Now either God is altogether outside of time, as many traditional theologians held, or He is not. Moreover, a lot may ride on this issue. Does this dispute also imply that at least one of the contending parties must be unwilling to accept the truth, and is therefore morally culpable?

I do not think so. In the first place, there are a range of positions on this question compatible with the central commitments of orthodoxy. But the most important point here is that the issues involved in this sort of debate are notoriously difficult even to grasp, let alone to resolve. Consequently, it would be highly implausible to claim that the truth on this matter is so clear that all persons of good will should agree on it.

But disagreement over a doctrine like the Incarnation is an altogether different sort of clash. Here we are dealing with the essence of Christianity. The disputed question in this case involves what is purported to be God's central act of salvation for the entire human race, to Christians a matter of such fundamental and eternal significance that strong moral implications are unavoidable. A truth of this sort would surely, as Pascal argued, have been revealed in such a way that any properly informed person of good will would see it to be true. In short, then, we either have to account for why Christians make the mistake of such monumental proportions in concluding Jesus was the very son of God incarnate and the necessary means to our salvation, or explain why others who have deliberately rejected this claim have missed a truth of such importance. In other words, the logic of fundamental religious disagreement inevitably involves mutually negative moral evaluation.

It is worth noting, incidentally, that such judgments of moral culpability apply not only to "infidels" but "apostates," that is, not only to adherents of other religions, but also to those raised in a given tradition who have rejected it. Indeed, it would be eminently plausible to think that the apostate would be even more culpable than typical infidels. Suppose again that Christianity is true and that one has been faithfully and lovingly nurtured in that faith. To reject the truth despite such benefits would surely be blameworthy.

Let us return now to interreligious disputes. It is obvious that a religion which claims to be the only path to human fulfillment makes negative judgments about those who reject that claim. What I have been trying to show is that the negative judgments cut both ways: adherents of other religions as well as unbelievers inevitably make negative judgments about adherents of exclusive religions. This point first became clear to me during a dinner conversation in which I was defending the claim that Christianity is objectively true. I was asked what I meant by that claim. I said something to the effect that if a religious seeker of good will was properly informed of the teachings of Christianity, of the evidences for it, and likewise with respect to other religions, and was not influenced by cultural biases (assuming for the sake of argument this could be the case), then that seeker would believe Christianity. If he would not, he would

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not truly be a person of good will. At this point, one of my listeners replied that that was one of the most arrogant things he had ever heard. It struck me that he did not intend that as a compliment.

Consider now a more publicized incident that makes the same point. A while back the Southern Baptist Convention adopted a resolution in support of Jewish evangelism, and their Home Mission Board appointed a missionary to American Jews. Jewish leaders were quick to condemn the resolution. Phil Baum, head of the American Jewish Congress, stated that the Baptists were "misguided" and that the resolution reflected "offensive doctrinal arrogance." Again, it is evident Mr. Baum did not intend his remarks to be a commendation of the moral sensibilities of Southern Baptists.

One more example. Harold Netland notes that Arnold Toynbee, a vigorous critic of exclusivism, asserted that "the only way to purge Christianity of the 'sinful state of mind' of exclusive-mindedness and its accompanying spirit of intolerance is to shed the traditional belief that Christianity is unique." Again, note that Toynbee turns the tables by accusing the Christian exclusivist of having a sinful state of mind.

Now these examples show that negative moral judgments in fact go both directions, but the question still remains of whether this *must* be the case. Can't we avoid such judgments? I do not think so.

Consider again the whole enterprise of missions and evangelism. Let us grant that evangelists and missionaries have sometimes behaved in an offensive and arrogant manner toward the persons they were trying to win to their faith. The fact remains that offensiveness is inherent in the very nature of missionary activity, in the very matter of believing that a religion is objectively and exclusively true. The practice of missions and evangelism is simply a straightforward practical implication of that belief.

If one believes Jesus is the Son of God incarnate, and that the Christian account of God is the true account of the only God who exists, then (as already noted) it follows that those who reject Jesus are rejecting the only God there is. And if salvation requires a right relationship with God, then one cannot enjoy salvation without acknowledging Jesus as the Son of God. Anyone who believes the foregoing, and, moreover, accepts the Christian mandate of love, must consequently desire all people to acknowledge Jesus as the Son of God. So the commitment to evangelism follows directly from belief in the Incarnation of Jesus and universal love. How can such evangelism be intrinsically arrogant or offensive?

Whatever offense there is must stem from the very belief that it is objectively true that Jesus is the Son of God incarnate. That is, it must be thought arrogant to believe that doctrine in the first place. Once we grant that belief in the doctrine is justified, it is hard to see how the practical implication could be thought arrogant. Indeed, we should think the person quite arrogant who believed something like the Incarnation but did not think he should make it known to other persons. In that case, the person would believe he had access to the most important truth one can imagine, yet did not think it incumbent upon him to spread the good news. At the very least, such behavior should be seen as selfish and contemptuous toward others, since it would reflect a lack of universal love.

It is not the evangelism that gives offense; one could hardly expect otherwise from a believer. The real source of the offense is the very belief that the Incarnation is objectively true.

Now this is an uncomfortable conclusion. Does it follow from this that adherents of different religions must hate each other or be intolerant of each other? Does it follow that they cannot work together for common moral and social goals? Certainly not. Indeed, as suggested above, it is precisely mutual love for each other that should impel each to evangelize the other and engage in mutual apologetics. And where love abounds, so should tolerance.

Of course, a person filled with love and respect for adherents of other religions should hope that their religious differences result from cultural or emotional blinders to understanding. The danger here is not only that he might, in ascribing unbelief to ignorance or blindness, become condescending or patronizing, but also that he might ignore the possibility that the nonbeliever has rejected his religion in a fully deliberate, and therefore culpable, way.

Interreligious dialogue can be fully honest only if we face up to our implicit judgments of culpability. Only then do we take fully seriously our dialogue partner. Only then do we give a sincere hearing to his deepest convictions. If we skirt or suppress these obvious implications, we have not given the genuine respect of open communication.

The only alternative to facing up to this is either to give up the claim that one's religion is objectively true and sufficiently warranted that it should be believed by all people, or to deny that unbelief is a serious matter. It is hard to see how either of these could be acceptable. Consider the following Pascalian couplet: "Men owe it to God to accept the religion he sends them. God owes it to men not to lead them into error." Unless we think God has not done his obligation with respect to us, then some persons are not doing their obligation with respect to God. It is this that constitutes what Pascal termed "wickedness of heart." And if one thinks my so arguing is itself an instance of stupidity or arrogance or perversity, that is, of course, only to be expected, given the logic of the matter.

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J. A. Di Noia

In his comment on my article "Jesus and the World Religions," Professor Jerry L. Walls asks, what must Christians conclude about people who refuse to accept Christianity's universal religious claim? Christianity affirms that communion with the triune God is the divinely willed aim of human life, and that all human persons should desire to enjoy this communion. Professor Walls argues that it would be unworthy of God to reveal a truth of such magnitude without doing so "in such a way that any properly informed person of good will would see it to be true." It follows that anyone who refuses to desire communion with the triune God is either not properly informed or, as Professor Walls suggests, not of good will.

If I have understood his argument correctly, Professor Walls is chiefly concerned with how to assess the offense—or, more precisely, the moral culpability—of persons who reject the truth about the Incarnation. One way of approaching the issues Professor Walls raises is to observe that, in the Catholic perspective, it is possible to distinguish three levels in our knowledge of the truth about God and, correspondingly, three different levels of moral culpability associated with the deliberate rejection of that truth.

The first level is commonly called "natural knowledge" of God. The First Vatican Council taught definitively that the existence of God as principle and end of all things can be known by the light of natural human reason alone; furthermore, in teaching about the "natural law" the Church clearly indicates that some significant knowledge of good and evil is natural to human beings. Created in the image of God, every human person possesses capacities to know and to love. Since Christianity does not teach the suppression of these natural capacities but their perfection in grace, it is a matter of concern to every person that these capacities be acknowledged for their potential to direct the person to the ultimately true and good.

At this "natural" level, one can speak of a moral imperative for every human person to respond to the natural desires to know God, and to love God and neighbor. Without divine grace, however, these natural desires to attain knowledge and love of God are impotent. If our natural capacities are to lead to a truly saving knowledge and love of God, the limitations and sinful state of all human beings must be overcome by grace—won for all human beings, including those who do not acknowledge this, by the incarnation, passion, death, and resurrection of Christ. But creatureliness and original sin do affect the degree of moral culpability incurred by someone who has not heard the Gospel preached, or is not certain about God's existence, or is ignorant of some specifics of natural law. According to Catholic teaching, moral guilt or offense would be incurred only if the natural desire for God were deliberately diverted to unworthy objects or the prompting of divine grace were actually refused.

A second level of human knowledge of God is that which the Church, since Justin Martyr in the second century, has called the *semina Verbi*, "seeds of the Word." These belong, strictly speaking, not to the natural order but to the supernatural. What is involved here is not simply the natural desire for God but a real, though partial, revelation of God in non-Christian religions and philosophies. Pope John Paul II has been emphatic in reaffirming the traditional Christian conviction that the Holy Spirit is active outside the visible Church:

> It is the Spirit who sows the "seeds of the Word" present in various customs and cultures, preparing them for full maturity in Christ. Thus the Spirit . . . leads us to broaden our vision in order to ponder his activity in every time and place. I have repeatedly called this fact to mind, and it has guided me in my meetings with a wide variety of peoples. The Church's approach to other religions is dictated by a twofold respect: "Respect for man in his quest for answers to the deepest questions of his life, and respect for the action of the Spirit in man." (*Redemptoris Missio,* 28-29)

Other religions can contain not only valuable expressions of the human desire for God, but also signs of the work of the Spirit. The fullness of revelation is transmitted to the human race through Christ. Through him alone do we learn about the triune God, and about His desire to bring human persons into the blessed communion of trinitarian life. Still, we ought not suppose that no truth is to be found in religious traditions outside the Christian ambit. Whatever truth there is must be the work of the Holy Spirit; the Church recommends that we try to identify such truth in the teachings of other religions by means of study and dialogue.

But, to turn to the issues that concern us here, what can we say about persons who refuse to accept the *semina Verbi* present to them in their religion or philosophy? Anyone who has recognized the elements of truth in his religious tradition is morally obliged to adhere to them. Anyone who has the impulse to pray is morally obliged to pray. Anyone who commits himself to a legitimate form of life that is driven by the desire for the ultimately True and Good is morally obliged to be faithful to that pursuit. There is also a moral obligation not to confer absolute value on pursuits that are by nature transient and limited.

On this level, the Christian would never recommend to anyone that he become, or remain, a Buddhist or Muslim—for that would be to recommend the seeds of the Word over against the Word himself. But the Christian does not have to deny the truth or

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the good that has already been or could be gained by adhering to another religion, and he certainly does not have to hold that the pursuit of the truth or the good in another religion is a morally culpable rejection of the ultimate truth and goodness of communion with the triune God that is revealed by Christ and proclaimed by the Church.

The third level of our knowledge of God is the knowledge of the whole revelation, received in the fullness of faith. This is the distinctive possession of Christianity, yet whether recognized or not it is the ultimate aim of every human being. The paradigm for the human possession of this knowledge is the experience of the blessed. In the pilgrim state of the Church on earth, there is the living faith of the company of believers who embrace not only the truth of the particular facts of revelation (e.g., the Incarnation, the sacraments, the Trinity) but who possess the fullness of the truth of God. At this level we cannot be content to talk about particular Christian claims, but must recognize their place in the whole of revelation. The writings of the saints bear striking testimony to the ability of the Christian, imbued with the living knowledge and love of God, not only to know the truths of the faith but to be at home in them, to see the connections between Trinity and Eucharist, Incarnation and judgment, Church and virtue, and so on. Such testimony is a foretaste of the complete knowledge possessed by the blessed.

What must we say of the person who refuses to accept the fullness of revelation? What else but that he is refusing the ultimate aim of life, and, in doing so deliberately, is morally culpable? The knowledge of this revelation is, properly speaking, eschatological. If by the fullness of revelation we mean the knowledge of God possessed by the saints in heaven, many who call themselves Christians would lack the fullness of Christianity. Christianity demands more than simply knowledge and assent—as the medieval theologians were fond of observing, the demons know perfectly well that Jesus Christ is true God and true man. Professor Walls neglects this point by focusing chiefly on the person who refuses to assent to the doctrine of the Incarnation. Measured against the saints in heaven, the person who rejects the truth of the Incarnation might not be any more morally culpable or guilty of lack of faith than the person who acknowledges it. Furthermore, since the fullness of revelation is, to say the least, somewhat hidden, it may not be possible in a given case to delineate how much of a non-Christian's refusal to believe in Christ is a deliberate rejection of the fullness of revelation, and how much is simply non-culpable ignorance of it.

Someone may argue that this last point obscures the discussion of the implications of religious claims. What good to the world is the Christian claim to the fullness of revelation if Christians are judged unfit to make the claim because of the imperfection of their faith? Is evangelization to be carried out only by saints? Yes; this is precisely the point that the Pope has made in his call for a "new evangelization":

> Just as it does in proclaiming the truths of the faith, and even more so in presenting the foundations and content of Christian morality, the new evangelization will show its authenticity and unleash all its missionary force when it is carried out through the gift not only of the word proclaimed but also of the word lived. In particular, *the life of holiness* which is resplendent in so many members of the People of God, humble and often unseen, constitutes the simplest and most attractive way to perceive at once the beauty of truth, the liberating force of God's love, and the value of unconditional fidelity to all the demands of the Lord's law, even in the most difficult situations. (*Veritatis Splendor*, 107)

The conclusion is not that no one who is not perfect can evangelize, any more than we would insist that no one can receive a sacrament who is not perfectly disposed to it; God will work wonders with the barest dross we give him. The point is rather that when we talk about the logical implications of proclaiming the distinctively Christian message, we must use as a norm the proclamation of the full message.

Another way to get at the same point is to consider the doctrine of the "hierarchy of truths," as reaffirmed explicitly by the Second Vatican Council. When we say that the Church's dogmas are arranged in a hierarchy, we do not mean that some are essential and others are peripheral, as if one need only assent to the former and not the latter. All these truths require the same degree of acceptance of faith. However, we do not assent to a body of disconnected doctrines. Because they reflect the truth of God Himself, the truths of the faith are related to each other in various ways, and many of them, though essential, are derivative of others (e.g., the doctrines about the Church derive from those about Christ). Professor Walls distinguishes between claims that touch the essence of Christianity (e.g., the Incarnation) and claims that are not essential. But the dogmatic claims of Christianity are not divided in this way. If we do not see the necessity of a subordinate dogma (e.g., the role of the Church), it is because we do not understand it as part of a hierarchy, as connected to a primary dogma (e.g., the economy of salvation).

These considerations lead us to three conclusions: (1) Concerning those things that are known by nature, ignorance of them can be the effect of creatureliness and sin; moral culpability lies in refusing to be led out of that ignorance. (2) Concerning the *semina Verbi*, some are known to every genuine religious believer; moral culpability lies in refusing to

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embrace and adhere to those truths, or in knowingly clinging to them in preference to a higher truth and a greater good to which they point. On both of these levels, the duty of the person is to respond to what has been made known to him according to the capacities cited above—a natural faculty in man to know the existence of God and the natural law, and a supernatural capacity, infused by the Holy Spirit, to recognize a certain good in the form of life presented by a non-Christian religion. (3) Concerning the fullness of revelation, it is possessed most perfectly by the blessed, but has been offered to all of those who put their trust in Christ; the moral culpability of the nonbeliever is difficult to assess, because so often what is presented to him is only a part of this whole revelation.

The moral question becomes an eschatological one: will a nonbeliever who has pursued to the end the good he has professed, and therefore has disposed himself to the reception of an even greater good, refuse to accept that greater good when it is presented to him in full clarity? And, like any eschatological reality, we have foretastes of it now: will a non-Christian who has become painfully aware of the sin in his life refuse to consider the possibility of redemption from that sin in Christ, a possibility exhibited obscurely but nonetheless really in the person of a living saint? The Christian judgment may be summed up in this way: eschatologically, Jesus Christ is the unique mediator of salvation, and all people must come to accept that fact; here and now, if any person suspects that Jesus Christ is the way to the ultimate aim of life, he bears the moral obligation to follow Christ and find out whether his suspicion is right.

Finally, this approach resolves the question of the offense involved in the Christian's judgment on the non-Christian. No non-Christian would take offense at the idea that he is morally obliged to exercise to the utmost his natural capacity to know and love to the uttermost, to respond faithfully to the good he has seen and committed himself to in another religion, and not to close himself to the possibility of recognizing a further good. If one argues that the offense lies in the Christian's claim that Christianity possesses that further good, I respond, as I did in my earlier essay, that if Christians were to retreat from advancing the claim that Jesus Christ is the unique mediator of salvation, it is not clear what they would have to offer to the world. I would now add a further claim: if Christians neglect to consider the fullness of revelation as the inner logic of their lives of faith—their theology, their communal life, their moral life, their prayer—it is not clear how they can respond to Christ's call to "make disciples of every nation."

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In Umbria

Not that we prepared for it, or at first
  noticed in the papery rustle
of the cottonwoods our shutters allowed,
  or through coffee on the terrace,
in the mist of a garden hose trained on
  lavender and roses, and glistening.
Still we are ready—equally in need—
  of such quietness to be received.

And virtually to breathe it in the blue
  fumaturo rising from the tilth
of vineyards and olive groves, the dreamy
  plumes of cypress and whitening grains,
inviting and warranting increases
  of thanks—under such circumstances,
to feel a native force, like remembrance,
  inquiring for the proper name of praise.

P. Fellowes

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Books In Review

Shut Up, He Explained

ANSWERING THE "VIRTUECRATS": A MORAL CONVERSATION ON CHARACTER EDUCATION. By ROBERT NASH. *Teachers College Press (Columbia University). 208 pp. $22.95.*

***Reviewed by* Gary Hardaway**

WHEN ROBERT NASH announces his intention to unmask the fallacies and foibles of those he dubs "virtuecrats"—character educators like William Bennett, William Kilpatrick, and Thomas Lickona—he promises more than the "answering" his title suggests. He vows to give them a good intellectual thrashing, after which, one infers, Bennett may never utter the word "virtue" again, Kilpatrick will confess that neither he nor Johnny can really know right from wrong, and Lickona will have to stop dedicating his books to God.

Nash promises to demonstrate that character education is a "deeply and seriously flawed" project, "unnecessarily apocalyptic . . . inherently authoritarian in its convictions . . . excessively nostalgic and premodern in its understanding of virtue, too closely aligned with a reactionary . . . politics, antiintellectual in its curricular initiatives, hyperbolic in its moral claims, dangerously antidemocratic," and more. Once the premodern virtuecrats have been dispatched, postmodern virtuecrats like Nash and his role model, Richard Rorty (when he isn't joshing), can inculcate "the spirit of postmodern virtues," starting with "a sensitivity to the postmodern realities of incommensurability, indeterminacy, and nonfoundationalism." As the teacher sensitizes the student to these noble negations, the student enters the postmodern landscape of "dialectical awareness; empathy; hermeneutical sensitivity; openness to alterity ('otherness'); respect for plurality; a sense of irony and humor . . . and humility in the face of shifting and elusive conceptions of goodness and truth."

Incommensurability, we are told, means "the absence of a common moral standard by which to evaluate competing moral vocabularies." If that's the case, it remains a mystery how Nash can possibly "answer" or so lustily condemn the competing moral vocabulary of his targeted "virtuecrats." Judging from his pugnacious introduction, he seems to have lost the sense of irony, humor, and humility he prescribes for the rest of us.

THE SECOND KEY denial of traditional rationality, indeterminacy, "assumes that no authority can ever determine . . . what ought to be the 'final' word on truth and morality." As we've already been told, the pilgrim along this pathway moves among "shifting and elusive conceptions of goodness and truth"—the moral equivalent of one of those spiraling, pulsating screen-saver images, or a cubist painting in random, perpetual motion. If so, how are we to understand Nash's critique of character education? How provisional, ephemeral, or hypothetical is it? Is it actually meaningless? It would seem that the universe of truth and meaning—or perhaps their "conceptions"—would have altered their states or contents by the time Nash's book came off the press.

The antifoundationalist teacher realizes that "no authority can justify a moral assertion once and for all." Ultimately, there is no ultimately. There is no rock for the wise man to build his house upon and no sand upon which the foolish man can throw up his shabby little lean-to. One must scrap the habit of justifying beliefs and actions. Having confessed that his views have no justification, why would Nash strain to convince us of their worth?

Nash hopes that teachers and students will assume "a vantage point of determining those virtues that are most likely to encourage a better quality of democratic life for everyone." It is perhaps impolite—and rather redundant—to ask how the "better" can be determined when it cannot be determined, and how the determiner can know what is "likely" to result in a "better" life.

Of course, postmodernists have a standard answer for this kind of questioning, namely, that those of us who think and talk this way are imprisoned in premodern categories, and enslaved to the linear mode of reasoning. The act of asking for consistency and cohesion in argument indicates our insensitivity to incommensurability, etc. The remedy is to repent of this disrespectful, antisocial behavior and learn the way of peace and democracy, i.e., sensitivity training. After suitable reorientation, we may hope to speak the language of alterity, with "a commitment to civility; a capacity for fairness and charity; compassion in the presence of suffering, with an antipathy for violence."

SOME OF THESE habits of the heart sound awfully familiar—remnants of the old-fashioned, discarded moral curriculum. It's hard to imagine what's so postmodern about civility, charity, compassion, and nonviolence. Why retain these? Well, they are "'democratic dispositions' necessary for productive and mutually respectful living in a diverse, robust, secular pluralist society." But why should people champion mutual respect? Why should they meekly accept a diverse secular pluralist society as is? If they don't like it, why shouldn't they try to overthrow it? My own guess is that postmodernists wouldn't like to live in any other kind of society. The only kind they can stand is a society made in their own image, after their own likeness.

The other jargon in Nash's catalogue fleshes out that likeness. He invites us to join one another in "di-

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alectical" moral conversation that avoids "the Scylla and Charybdis of two perilous extremes—relativism and objectivism." Nash, like Rorty, thoroughly dislikes and rejects the label of relativist, which is, not surprisingly, often bestowed on philosophers like himself. (For obvious reasons, no one seems to label him or Rorty objectivists.) The dialectical approach is "free-flowing," characterized by "critical discussion and negotiation" that navigates between the extremes, the Scylla of right and the Charybdis of wrong. But Nash hopes that through much sharing of perspectives, interpretations, and vocabularies, a sense of understanding and a possible "shared moral reality" might emerge. That indeed seems like a worthy goal and, from, say, a theistic perspective, an achievable one. From Nash's presuppositions, it seems more quixotic.

Occasionally, friends of Bennett, Lickona, Kilpatrick; Marva Collins, and other character educators will find evidence in these pages that virtue inculcation often makes good sense, even to its enemies. Nash, to his credit, doesn't hide facts that strain his thesis. Early in the book he tells of a sex educator in one of his classes who burst out with this tirade against Kilpatrick's *Why Johnny Can't Tell Right from Wrong*: "Even though Kilpatrick has almost convinced me that what I do as a sex educator is counterproductive in many ways, I'd never admit it to him, nor would I change anything I do. He's far too self-righteous and close-minded for me to take seriously." Despite her protests, she obviously is taking him very seriously. The message has struck home. Like C. S. Lewis shooing away the hound of heaven, she can offer no intellectual objection to the message—only bitter, personal resentment that it is true, it is unflattering, it is unpalatable.

Nash himself, despite his in-your-face introduction, often comes across as a decent, likeable sort. He is at his best when he narrates how he conducts moral conversation in which each student is oriented to the class, respected as a human being, encouraged to contribute, and listened to with intentional interest.

YET, AS ONE READS his ground rules for moral conversation, an ominous intuition troubles the soul. The student is commanded: "You [will] show a willingness to improve your current moral language, because it may be incomplete." The suspicious veteran of the culture wars wonders, "What kind of moral language will be weighed and found wanting? Which student must show a willingness to yield his language and convictions?" Probably not those whom Nash affectionately describes as "postmodern in temperament, eschewing any belief in a universal metaphysical or moral archetype." Probably not those who are sensitized to the subtleties of incommensurability, indeterminacy, and antifoundationalism. "These students," he remarks with favor, "question other-worldly views of reality, preferring to remain persistently grounded in the here-and-now." It seems unlikely that these secularists will be required to "improve" their language.

That leaves the intransigent "virtuecrat" who refuses to embrace the fashionable decadence of the moment, someone, for instance, who follows the One Who told his inquisitor that His kingdom was not of this world. One is left with the troubling thought that the authority on the throne—or in the classroom—has lost hold of the sense of any transcendent good or evil. The modern Pilate presents an ensnaring, condescending question—"What is truth?"—and expects the subject to know that no answer is expected, and none will be tolerated. End of conversation.

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Waugh Revisited

THE LIFE OF EVELYN WAUGH. By DOUGLAS LANE PATEY. *Blackwell. 448 pp. $44.95.*

Reviewed by
Kenneth R. Craycraft Jr.

WHEN ST. AUGUSTINE wrote his *Confessions*, he was, in a strong sense, "inventing" a life. To the raw data of his remarkable and varied experiences, he attempted to apply his freshly invented idea of history in order to tell a story. Of course he had lived these experiences, but they did not become *a story* until he reflected upon their meaning and relatedness. What then emerged is a delicately painted narrative portrait, in which the artist supplies interpretive gloss, showing us nearly as much in the telling as in the events he recalls and describes.

While never explicitly invoking Augustine in this context, Douglas Lane Patey employs just such an idea in his aptly titled final chapter of *The Life of Evelyn Waugh*: "Retrospective: Shaping a Life." For Patey, it is no surprise that Waugh's late fiction (the War Trilogy, *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold*) was so confessional. "Waugh's first sustained use of fiction," an early, unsuccessful short story, was already "the vehicle for exploring the shape of his own life." Indeed, Patey convinces the reader that the narrative structure of human life—life as a novel—was a constant preoccupation of Waugh; his fiction was the means of communicating that truth.

Patey's sympathetic and acute portrait of Waugh narrates Waugh's narration of his own life, combining thorough research with an exhaustive knowledge of Waugh's fiction and nonfiction and the insight of a highly skilled literary critic. The result is the finest bi-

KENNETH R. CRAYCRAFT JR. *teaches theology at St. Mary's University of San Antonio, Texas, and is author of* The American Myth of Religious Liberty, *forthcoming from Spence.*

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ography by far of Evelyn Waugh to date, and a welcome corrective of the regnant record.

In recent years, two noteworthy biographies of Waugh have been produced: Martin Stannard's two-volume work (1986 and 1992), and a 1994 study by Selena Hastings. Hastings' book was rightly received by many as a delicate and sensitive book; but while very good of its kind, it was not a literary biography. She showed more interest in Waugh's correspondence (which is well worth a great deal of attention) than in his published work.

Stannard's work has been harshly criticized, even by some who have no particular sympathy for Waugh, for its caustic—indeed malevolent—treatment of Waugh, especially his religion after World War II. (For a gentler judgment, see George Weigel's review essay, "St. Evelyn Waugh," FT, May 1993.) Stannard grew to loathe his subject to such a degree that the second volume is less critical biography than bitter screed, telling us a great deal about the dark prejudices of the biographer, but very little about the life and thought of the subject.

PATEY CONSCIOUSLY writes his book in the wake of these earlier works. He provides the kind of sympathetic, but never uncritical, treatment of Hastings' book (along with detailed exposition of the fiction lacking in Hastings), and deliberately responds to the grotesquely distorted portrait of Stannard's Waugh. Along the way, Patey also engages in some persuasive literary revisionism, claiming that in a few key areas, Waugh's life and writing have been consistently misunderstood and misinterpreted.

The most important early revisionist thesis of the biography is that even before his conversion to Catholicism (at the age of twenty-seven, in 1930) Waugh's concerns were primarily religious, and they are represented in his serious and weighty—as Patey contends—early satiric novels *Decline and Fall* and *Vile Bodies*. Critics have often failed to note either the theology or the satire of these books, both because they have not understood the modernist crisis as primarily a religious crisis and because they have failed to note the chief elements of satire.

In Patey's reading, the modernist crisis reflected in the early novels is at heart a crisis of the rootlessness, alienation, and disorientation of British youth coming of age in the 1920s, in the aftermath of World War I. The institutions and conventions that gave direction to the manners of Edwardian England had been discarded, leaving nothing to fill the void but the vertiginous excesses of Waugh's Bright Young People. But even in these pre-conversion novels, Waugh sees the jettisoning of traditional Christianity as the immediate cause of the crisis.

This theme, while less explicit than in later novels, is thickly woven through *Decline and Fall* and *Vile Bodies*. While Waugh does not exonerate the Bright Young People of his generation for their vacuousness, he indicts their parents for failing to tell a true story about human identity, purpose, and order—a story that, as Waugh was later to say explicitly, cannot be told without God. "Outside the whole of which he is properly part," argues Patey, "the individual can be only a meaningless, unfulfilled (though perhaps colorful) fragment." The Bright Young People "readily shift identities because they lack the tools with which to achieve any coherent, stable self."

The reason, Patey says, that reviewers have missed this thesis in Waugh's early fiction is because they have failed to read it as serious, high satire. A scholar of British Restorationist and Augustan literature, Patey has a keen eye for the Swiftian allusions and turns in these novels, the kind of satire so ingeniously constructed it can be seen as nothing more than frivolity or farce by the careless reader. This is because, Patey argues, "The

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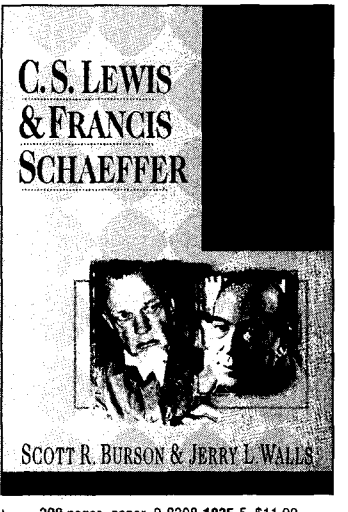

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satirist's energies are occupied mainly in his elaborately crafted negations; his positive values—generally conventional, even dull—are usually only implied, by negation of their contraries. Absence of explicitly positive models is easily confused with absence of positive values." Missing this, reviewers and critics have missed the serious theses of Waugh's early novels, of which the later novels are an elaboration, not contradiction.

Patey also argues that Waugh's politics were much more thoughtful and refined than critics and biographers have credited. This, too, stems from a failure to understand the way Waugh's (now explicit) Christian faith thoroughly flavored his political views. Here Patey reaches a depth that Hastings, Stannard (and even the sympathetic 1975 work of Christopher Sykes) could not. Patey's own evident Catholic faith and theological sophistication help him to see, and to show the reader, that Waugh's politics were always the politics of the Church—a building without walls, standing against the barbarisms of the age, whether in civil war-torn Ethiopia, faux-cultured Britain, or the Nazism and Stalinism of the pre- through post- World War II years.

Waugh's seeming lack of interest in politics for a significant period before the War—indeed his dismissal of all politics as "pernicious diversion"—is, argues Patey, itself a deliberate, substantive political stand. The problems of Nazism and Communism are not political problems, thought Waugh: they are theological problems that can be addressed only in theological terms. For Waugh to attack the left in terms of the right, or the right in terms of the left—unthinkable, at any rate—would be to retreat from the fundamental perception that these are rival false solutions to rebuilding postwar British (indeed Western) civilization. Waugh would attack any politics that oppressed the Church; but he would not attack one politics in the terms of another.

By 1945, Patey argues, Waugh had become convinced that all literature is politics (or "propaganda"). But the politics advocated in his greatest novel, *Brideshead Revisited*, are the politics of Catholicism, not the politics of conservatism. This is something again, Patey argues, reviewers and critics have largely misunderstood.

IT IS IMPOSSIBLE to pay sufficient tribute to the chapter Patey devotes to *Brideshead Revisited*. It is, simply, the very best interpretation of the novel of which I am aware. From his revisionist treatment of "the age of Hooper" (a parody of the "Century of the Common

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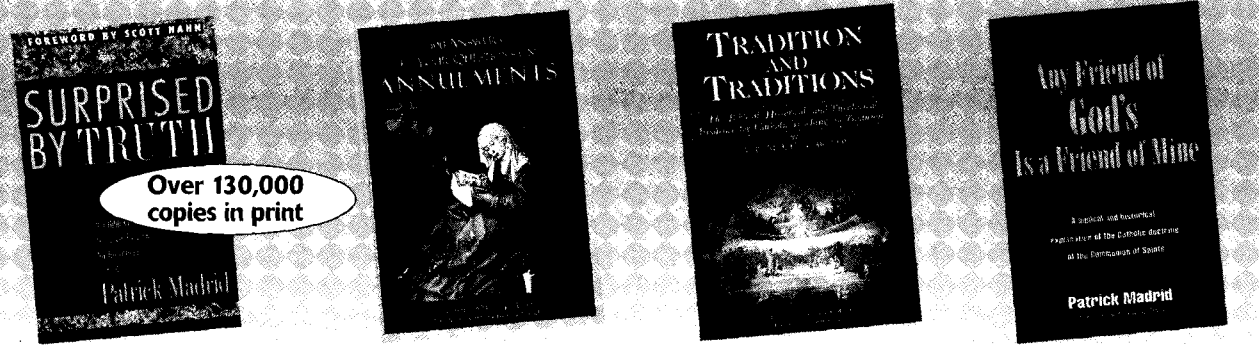
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Man"), to his delicate and thoughtful discussion of Waugh on homosexuality, to his careful exegesis of Lord Marchmain's deathbed conversion, to his brilliant analysis of Sebastian's alcoholism and his relation to Lady Marchmain (and the resentment that the need to be forgiven can engender), to the complex religious faith of Lord Brideshead, Cordelia, Julia, and eventually Charles Ryder, the author betrays his great love for the novel, and deep appreciation for the richness of its themes.

Most importantly, Patey forcefully and successfully rebuts the too-common dismissal of *Brideshead Revisited* as a celebration of British upper class snobbery. Patey reads *Brideshead Revisited* as a searing indictment of the manners of smugness and snobbery. The Flyte family's Catholicism is Waugh's antidote to snobbery, not its celebration. The only ugly building in a novel full of grand and beautiful buildings is the deplorably designed and decorated chapel at Brideshead Castle. But as the grand Castle—a tribute to ancient British aristocracy—falls into disrepair and decay, the chapel "showed no ill-effects of its long neglect." British aristocratic snobbery (which Waugh delighted in mimicking and mocking) was as "bosh" as the stifling, egalitarian ideology emerging in the postwar era. Waugh's religious faith was not connected to either; it stood alone as a witness against all attempts to tell the human story without the proper ending in view.

Brideshead Revisited reveals (as do the three War novels, and *Helena* and *Love Among the Ruins*) the mind of a theologically mature and gifted novelist, pursuing themes of grace and nature, repentance and reconciliation, fall and redemption, hope and despair as skillfully as any theological tract. Waugh was a comic novelist because his faith in the resurrection of Christ told him that tragedy was not the true story of human being. To be sure, this comedy of redemption is being acted on a stage set for tragedy; that's what makes it look out of place. It is what made Evelyn Waugh feel and often seem out of place. The resurrection was the true story of Waugh's very imperfect life, richly narrated in this extraordinary biography.

Douglas Lane Patey has combined the skill of a brilliant literary critic with sympathy for Waugh's religious faith to produce a deeply satisfying book. It is the best biography of Waugh, and as good as biography gets.

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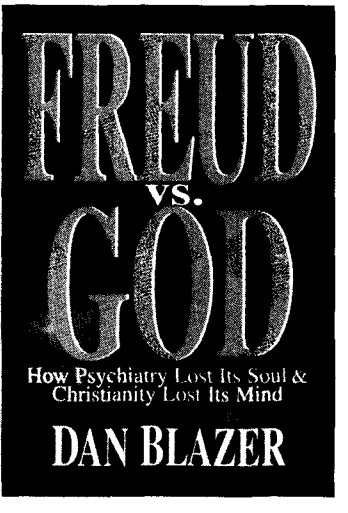

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Reviewed by **Bill Coyle**

THE LITERARY CLIMATE in the twentieth century has not been notably hospitable to religious poetry. Indeed, one might assert that the tradition, which in English peaked with Donne, Herbert, Vaughn, and Milton, has been in decline, despite the relatively late appearance of a poet as gifted as Gerard Manley Hopkins. Granted, such poets as T. S. Eliot and W. H. Auden based some of their most important works (one thinks particularly of "The Four Quartets" in Eliot's case, and of "Horae Canonicae" in Auden's) on Christian convictions. Even then, though, it was clear that these poets were writing for a public—the increasingly limited public of poetry readers and writers—that was at best indifferent to, and often hostile toward, Christianity.

It is an encouraging sign, then, to come across a new book of verse as stylistically accomplished and direct in its grapplings with matters of faith as Mark Jarman's *Questions for Ecclesiastes*. This is the seventh book of poetry from Jarman, who

BILL COYLE *is a Visiting Lecturer in the English Department at Salem State College in Salem, Mass.*

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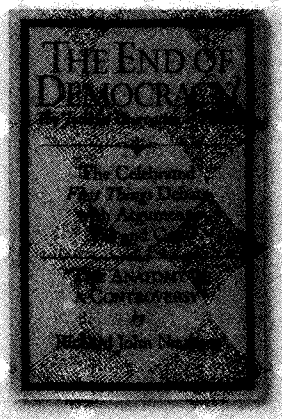

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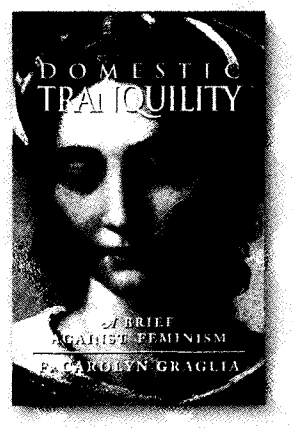

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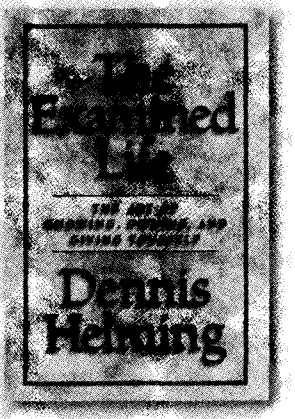

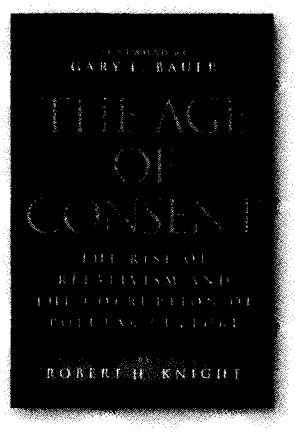

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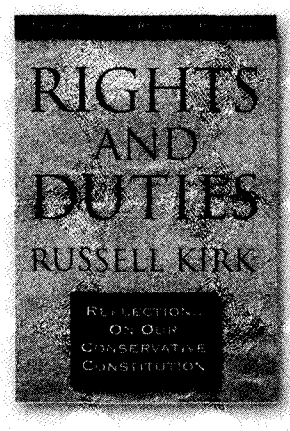

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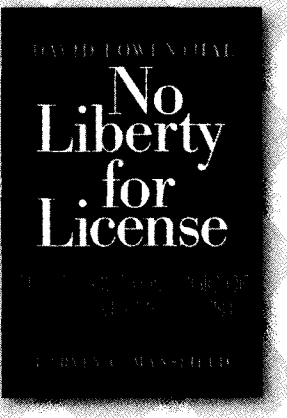

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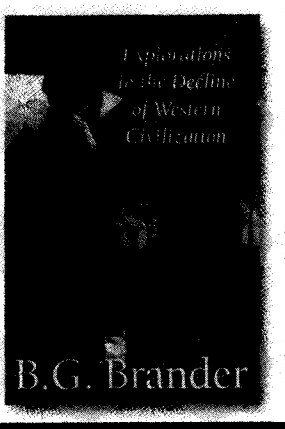

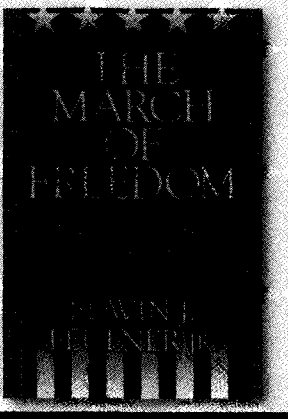

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teaches at Vanderbilt University and who has also received attention as an editor and critic. The title alludes to that book of the Bible so beloved by skeptics and pessimists, for the questions Jarman poses in poem after poem are challenges to the Preacher's resigned acceptance, and to his famous assertion that "all is vanity."

Jarman poses these questions most directly and memorably in the title poem, which tells the story of a preacher (Jarman's father) visiting a couple whose daughter has just committed suicide. The poem incorporates the things this preacher does *not* say, but that the biblical Ecclesiastes does—"the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing," "the dead know not anything for the memory of them is forgotten," "live joyfully . . . all the days of the life of thy vanity . . . for that is thy portion in this life"—all of which would have been cold comfort to this couple in their loss. The poem's complex weaving of sympathetic imaginings, personal remembrances, naturalistic descriptions, and biblical quotations is evident in its concluding stanza.

> Still that night exists for people I do not know in ways I
> do not know, though I have
> tried to imagine them. I
> remember my father going
> out and my father
> coming back. The fog, like
> the underskin of a
> broken wave, made a low
> ceiling that the street
> lights pierced and illuminated. And God who shall
> bring every work into judgment, with every secret
> thing, whether it be good or
> whether it be evil, who
> could have shared what he
> knew with people who
> needed urgently to hear it,
> God kept a secret.

God is as much an absence as a presence for Jarman; in this sense he is an eminently modern poet. The conversation is never, as it sometimes was with earlier poets, two-sided. On the other hand, Jarman does speak of, and sometimes to, God with a directness one could be forgiven for having thought no longer possible. Certainly it is not currently fashionable.

Almost as keenly regretted as God's silence is the inevitable passage of time. There is throughout the book a feeling of melancholy and of nostalgia, a sense of a world surrounded by the threat of extinction. There are references throughout to mist, sleep, night, the ocean—all symbols, for Jarman, of an encroaching nothingness. This is not to say that the volume is joyless, but that the joy is made keener through knowledge of the things that overwhelm or threaten to overwhelm it. In "A.M. Fog," a meditation on the title subject leads the poet back to a scene from his youth.

> I remember a gang of friends
> Racing a fog bank's onslaught
> along the beach.
> Seal-slick, warm from the sun
> This thing would eat, they
> ran laughing.
>
> The fog came on. And they
> were beautiful,
> The three boys and one girl,
> still in her wetsuit,
> And the dissolution overtaking them,
> Their stridency, full of faith,
> still audible.

AT HEART, though, this is a book about family, or rather, the complex relationship between faith and family. Indeed, though the poet dwells persistently, almost obsessively, on the theme of families, and on their kindnesses and cruelties, the book is saved from the bathos common to confessional poetry by the larger view afforded by Christian faith. In "Last Suppers," the tragedy unfolding in Leonardo's painting and its countless reproductions is played off the family tragedies and betrayals that happen around the dinner table. In "Proverbs," a passage from the biblical book of the same name provides the starting point for a medi-

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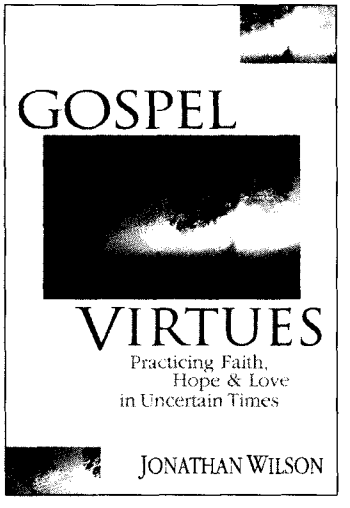

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tation on sexual love. And in "Patience," part of a sequence called "The Past from the Air," a child longing for some response to prayer is juxtaposed with a mother waiting for her absent husband to call from the road. The linkage between the two predicaments deepens our understanding of both.

> The call will come. She knows his call will come.
> Meanwhile, she works and answers children's questions.
> Today one question is, "Why is God dumb?"
> She pauses. Dumb? And puts a stamp in place.
> "Yes," says the child. "All I can hear is silence
> After I pray." Inside she notes the challenge:
> *If God does not exist, describe his absence.*
> No word. No word. No word. No word. No word.

Jarman has found his subject, and he has the stylistic resources to help him explore it. Meter and rhyme have lately been making a comeback, but their competent use is still rare enough to be noteworthy. Most of the poems in *Questions for Ecclesiastes* are written in well-modulated iambic pentameter or some variation thereof. Those that are not—"Transfiguration," "Proverbs," the title poem—imitate the forms of the biblical texts on which they are based. The most technically impressive part of the book, though, is the series of twenty "Unholy Sonnets." Jarman has said that the title was chosen to avoid making a presumptuous comparison between his verses and John Donne's "Holy Sonnets." Sonnet two is, to my mind, the most successful. Here the poet's metrical technique is prominently on display, and the confines of the form allow him an opportunity to display his wit and wordplay, as a child's game becomes a grim meditation on mankind's relationship to God.

> Hands folded to construct a church and steeple,
> A roof of knuckles, outer walls of skin,
> The thumbs as doors, the fingers bent within
> To be revealed, wriggling, as "all the people,"
> All eight of them, enmeshed, caught by surprise,
> Turned upward blushing in the sudden light,
> The nails like welders' masks, the fit so tight
> Among them you can hear their half-choked cries
> To be released, to be pried from this mess
> They're soldered into somehow—they don't know.
> But stuck now they are willing to confess,
> If that will ease your grip and let them go,
> Confess the terror they cannot withstand
> Is being locked inside another hand.

Questions for Ecclesiastes has its faults. Jarman seems at times (in "Dressing My Daughters," for example) to drag the divine in to touch up what would otherwise be an undistinguished poem. The result is a sameness that becomes evident if one reads too many of the poems at a stretch. And formally gifted as the poet is, he does on occasion shift from exact to inexact rhyme in a manner that makes it appear he is not fully in control of his material. These are minor reservations, however, given the strengths of the book as a whole.

A World of Mendacity

THE SOVIET WORLD OF AMERICAN COMMUNISM. By HARVEY KLEHR, JOHN EARL HAYNES, and KYRILL M. ANDERSON. *Yale University Press. 378 pp. $35.*

***Reviewed by* Paul Hollander**

THE COLLAPSE of the Soviet Union demolished many falsehoods of contemporary history. The Soviet Union itself was a singular embodiment of falsehoods, its legitimacy

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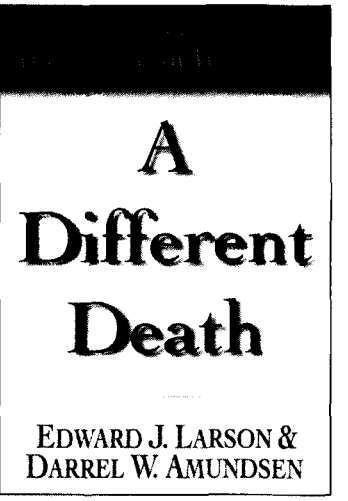

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resting, uneasily and precariously (as it turned out), on massive and determined misrepresentations of its own character, goals, and accomplishments.

The necessity of reliance on falsehoods had three major sources. First was the conspiratorial tradition of the Bolsheviks, who, having spent years underground and in exile, absorbed the outlook and methods bred by their experience. Secondly, there was the compulsion, persisting to the very end, to claim that the early idealistic goals of the revolution—Marxist-inspired goals incapable of realization—were in fact being achieved.

PAUL HOLLANDER *teaches sociology at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. His books include* Soviet and American Society: A Comparison, Political Pilgrims, *and* Anti-Americanism. *His* Political Will and Personal Belief in the Decline and Fall of Soviet Communism *will be published by Yale University Press in 1999.*

Finally, the unpopularity of the system led to a reflexive official mendaciousness whose endless efforts to persuade via propaganda further institutionalized the culture of the lie.

Communist movements and parties around the world bore the imprint of the Soviet model, as Harvey Klehr, John Earl Haynes, and Kyrill M. Anderson illustrate in *The Soviet World of American Communism.* Many Americans refused to believe for a very long time that the American Communist movement too was tainted by deceptions. It is an ironic twist of history that Senator Joseph McCarthy and his anti-Communist crusade stimulated an enduring sympathy toward the Communist Party of the United States of America (CPUSA) on the part of academic intellectuals, liberal opinion makers, Hollywood celebrities, and segments of the educated public. Critics of McCarthyism complained about "witch hunts" and "red-baiting." The latter meant the groundless and reckless attribution of Communist beliefs and associations to those *not* holding them; quite often, though, those who claimed to be victims of "red baiting" actually were card-carrying Communists.

Following the 1960s, the rehabilitation of the American Communist movement gathered speed, helped by the ethos of the period. For most activists of the 1960s there was no enemy on the left; the enemies of the establishment, the ruling class, or the military-industrial complex were their friends, including American Communists and fellow travelers. Alger Hiss and the Rosenbergs became martyrs, the latter the subject of a veritable cult. The American Communist movement came to be sentimentalized and entered the pantheon of the virtuous victims of American political repression, and in that capacity continues to enjoy a favorable reputation among many on the left.

CRUCIAL TO THE efforts to rehabilitate and idealize the American Communist Party was the contention that it was a grassroots organization of socially conscious Americans, fighting for social justice, concerned with mainly American conditions, and not subservient to the USSR. Only after the dissolution of the Soviet Union and subsequent access to the archives of the Soviet Communist Party did definitive proof become available that the CPUSA was almost totally subservient to Soviet policies and instructions.

The Secret World of American Communism (1995), a predecessor to this book, documented the clandestine links between the CPUSA and the Soviet authorities, including the Soviet intelligence agency, the NKVD. Spying on behalf of the Soviet Union became acceptable for American Communists convinced that any contribution to the power, influence, and welfare of the USSR was morally legitimate. (The Soviet documents confirmed, among other things, that the younger sister of American party leader Earl Browder was an agent of the

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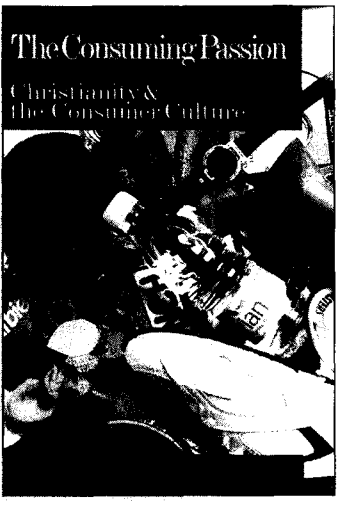

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NKVD.) The Soviet documents also revealed that "the CPUSA was . . . a conspiracy financed by a hostile foreign power that recruited members for clandestine work, developed an elaborate underground apparatus, and used that apparatus to collaborate with espionage services of that power."

The volume reviewed here is also based on documents found in the Soviet archives, and they provide further information about the specifics of the relationship between the CPUSA and the Soviet authorities. This is how the authors summarize that relationship:

> American Communists looked to the Comintern [the Communist International dominated by the Soviet Communist Party and headquartered in Moscow] for guidance at every stage of their history. Soviet Communists settled American leadership disputes; they funded American movements and programs; they directed American ideology. And they always placed the national interests of the Soviet Union above those of other countries. . . . The CPUSA has always been a satellite, first of the Comintern and later of the Soviet Communist party. The ties between the two organizations, those of subordinate to superior, existed on every level. The Soviets established the ideology, provided the money, chose or approved leaders, and monitored the tactics of the Americans. With only few exceptions, American Communists did not question the Comintern's right to exercise that control.

THE 1941 "Draft Resolution on the American Question" exemplified the deceptive tactics of the CPUSA and its Soviet sponsors. Produced in Moscow, the resolution stated that "it is necessary that the party act still more effectively as a truly national party of the American working class, as the best defender of the happiness, welfare, and peace of *its* people and *its* nation, as an independent American party guided by the teachings of Marxism-Leninism." In the very same breath, Moscow was also instructing this "independent American Party" on its policies and tactics.

Among the most disgraceful policies of the CPUSA was its unconditional support of the Soviet-Nazi Pact in 1939. The authors note: "From May 31 to June 1, 1940 . . . the CPUSA held a special anti-war conference in New York City that was attended by about two thousand party officials and delegates. A microfilmed transcript of the proceedings was sent to Moscow. Every party leader of note and many local members spoke at length opposing either assistance to Britain and France or American military preparation." At this time Britain and France were already at war with Germany while the Soviet Union occupied half of Poland thanks to the treaty. One of the Soviet documents justified the treatment of Poland by pointing out that it "was a reactionary multinational state built on the oppression of Ukrainians, Belorussians, and Jews. It decayed because of the corruption of the ruling classes. The international proletariat has no interest in the existence of such a parasitical state." The Poles should even have been thankful: "The Soviet Union, in coming to the aid of Western Ukrainian and Belorussian workers, saved eleven million people from a capitalist hell, brought them into the ranks of socialism, assured their national and cultural development, and . . . secured them from foreign enslavement." Such Orwellian linguistic reversal of reality was routinely dispensed by Soviet ideologues and their American associates.

The CPUSA gave unconditional

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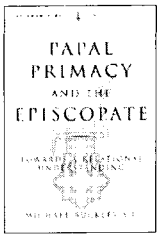

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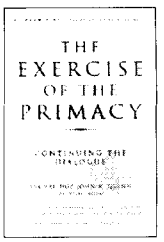

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and fierce support to the vast fabrications of the Soviet show trials. Closely following the party line, Earl Browder in 1935 told the Central Committee of the CPUSA: "Any sustained and continued opposition against the party inevitably leads directly over into the opposite camp, the camp of counterrevolution. This must teach us the lesson to become much more irreconcilable in our struggle against every deviation in our movement."

The American party did not offer any help or sympathy to American Communists who had moved to the USSR only to become victims of the purges during the 1930s. Thousands of American and Canadian Finns returned to the Soviet Union during the 1920s and '30s and settled in the Karelian region bordering Finland to help build socialism. The CPUSA, the authors note, "had depicted the Soviet Union as a workers' paradise, [and] had assisted the emigration of Finnish-Americans to Karelia. . . . When the American emigrants were swept up in the Great Terror, the CPUSA either ignored the situation or actively supported the false characterization of these victims as spies and saboteurs and tried to cover up what was going on."

In 1936-38 "Soviet Security police arrested several hundred—perhaps more than a thousand—North American Finnish immigrants (mostly adult males) and charged them with . . . 'bourgeois nationalism,' of having been spies for Finland or another foreign power, or of plotting to detach Karelia from the Soviet Union and unite it with Finland." The leaders of the CPUSA discussed the arrests "in the context of combating whatever negative impact the arrests might have. There was no discussion of the legitimacy of the arrests, nor any decisions to protest them."

THE FAITHFULNESS OF the CPUSA to Soviet policies was also illustrated by its avid support of the Soviet authorities in their various doctrinal disputes and domestic political campaigns, in particular those waged against the followers (real and alleged) of Trotksy and Bukharin. "When the Soviet Union executed thousands of Trotskyists," the authors report, "the American Communists cheered them on." The New York branch of the party went so far as to pass a resolution to expel not only accused Trotskyists and Lovestonites but even those who were married to one; they could remain in the party only if they separated from their politically contaminated partner.

It should be noted that there was a difference between the party leadership/core membership and many individual members of the CPUSA. Large numbers of members left the party at various historical junctures, unable to swallow the changes in the party line. But it was not these idealistic and transient members who defined the policies and character of the Party, but their leaders and superiors who continued their abject subservience to the USSR.

The CPUSA depended on the Soviet Union because of its small size and the fact that it received little support from the American working class. It may indeed be argued that feeling beleaguered and isolated in a society by no means sympathetic to their beliefs made the leaders and core supporters all the more dependent on Soviet help and guidance. By contrast, European Communist parties enjoying far greater mass support were capable of somewhat greater autonomy.

The fate and reputation of the American Communist movement has acquired an iconic significance for supporters of the adversary culture that developed in the 1960s and beyond. While this volume and its predecessor have conclusively demystified the CPUSA, for those who still need to believe in the unique evil America represents and who feel compelled to idealize all radical critics of American society, these findings are likely to be dismissed.

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Modernity and Christianity Reconsidered

THE DISENCHANTMENT OF THE WORLD: A POLITICAL HISTORY OF RELIGION. By MARCEL GAUCHET. Translated by Oscar Burge, with an introduction by Charles Taylor. *Princeton University Press. 228 pp. $29.95.*

***Reviewed by* Brian C. Anderson**

MARCEL GAUCHET'S *The Disenchantment of the World* is breathtaking in its ambition, offering nothing short of a new theory of the birth of modernity out of the spirit of Christianity. Ranging across religious history, anthropology, political philosophy, sociology, and economics, the author, editor of the prestigious intellectual journal *Le Débat*, challenges the narrowness of much recent philosophy and places religion at the center of the human condition, where it rightfully belongs.

When the book first appeared in France a little over a decade ago, it set off a fierce debate over the nature of democratic modernity and firmly established Gauchet's reputation as one of the preeminent political thinkers of his generation. We should welcome its translation in Princeton University Press' New French Thought series. Yet as dazzling as Gauchet's book can be—I would compare it in scope and importance to Hans Blumenberg's *The Legitimacy of the Modern Age*, Pierre Manent's *The City of Man*, and Charles Taylor's *Sources of the Self*—the author's understanding of modernity, his view of Christianity, and even his grasp of the problems besetting our troubled Western societies raise more questions than they answer.

GAUCHET'S ARGUMENT, not easy to follow through the dense thicket of his prose, is that at the foundation of society, Western political and economic institutions, and our self-understanding lies religion. Religion, on Gauchet's view, forms a "counter-subjectivity," an "other" that always exists in relation to human subjectivity. What he means is that religion and freedom—the latter understood by Gauchet as man's power to innovate, to free himself from the weight of history, and give himself, à la Rousseau, his own moral law—oppose one another. Political history tells the long story of religion's withdrawal and the coming into existence of a "disenchanted" world where man, exercising his liberty, is the measure of all things.

The most fully realized forms of religion, Gauchet holds, are not the richly developed monotheistic faiths of Judaism and Christianity, but the "primeval" religions that existed prior to the five millennia of Western history. In these pre-political societies, lost in the mists of time, man experienced radical dispossession: the past determined the laws regulating every aspect of life. More, the sacred founding of the world was beyond human control, or even human questioning. While ritual could reenact the founding, reminding everyone of its inescapability, no one could assume its authority. All were equal before it. But though man had no access to the foundation of the human world, he nevertheless lived in a state of "enchantment," where no clear line divided the mundane from the realm where occult forces were at play. In these ancient, magical, egalitarian societies, the gods rumbled through nature, present alongside man in an all-encompassing order. For countless ages, the rhythm of life beat slowly, as if the entire universe slumbered.

"The deepest enigma of human history" is at work in these time-lost societies, Gauchet believes, for man's freedom means that he is capable of transcending his circumstances, and of altering the earth, his social relations, even his most profound beliefs, according to his will. Strange, then, that primeval religion froze this power into place for tens of thousands of years; perhaps it answered some deep need of human nature. Only with the emergence of the state in ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia, 3,000 years before the birth of Christ—relatively recently when we consider the span of human history—was the rhythm

BRIAN C. ANDERSON *is Senior Editor of* City Journal *and the author of* Raymond Aron: The Recovery of the Political *(Rowman & Littlefield).*

The City of Man

Pierre Manent

With a foreword by Jean Bethke Elshtain

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broken, and did we find ourselves "plunged . . . into another religious world, one capable of existing without religion—our own."

What did the state introduce? Structurally, it opened space for human action, since power, after all, exists for man to use. And use it he soon did—to conquer his fellow men. Politics entered the world, disrupting the equality that held under primeval religion; rulers arose who, justifying their elevation from run-of-the-mill mortals, linked themselves to the gods. As politics and religion became entwined, the sacred law was no longer completely beyond human reach. Gauchet describes the major world religions, including prophetic Judaism, as growing out of this initial existential fracture.

The world religions of the "Axial Age" (the term is the German philosopher Karl Jasper's) brought with them a three-fold "dynamics of transcendence." First, the sacred, previously dispersed throughout nature, drew together as an omnipotent God, acting in the world but increasingly transcendent from it. Second, God's transcendence led man to abandon magical explanations for the phenomena that surrounded him. Third, the idea of human universality spread with the extension of political empire—the new God was to be God of all men. The dynamics of transcendence result in a fascinating paradox, Gauchet suggests: the more powerful God becomes, the "more man is free." With monotheism, man began to reason for himself, to question the divine law, to embrace his freedom. The historical process of disenchantment had been unleashed.

CHRISTIANITY FORGES a profoundly different relationship between the human and the divine, forming, in Gauchet's striking phrase, the "religion for departing from religion." At the end of the Christian era, Gauchet writes, we find ourselves at the heart of modernity, entering a post-religious age of human autonomy, democracy, science, and capitalism, with the effective truth of Christianity revealed as secularism. How does Christianity bring about the disenchantment of the world? Typically, whether we trace the onset of modernity to Machiavelli (as does Leo Strauss) or to Descartes (as does the Italian Catholic philosopher Augusto Del Noce), it is seen, at least in its main path, as a divorce from Christianity. Was not the Catholic Church, in the eyes of the great Enlightenment thinkers, the sworn enemy of reason, human freedom, and the entire panoply of positive goods we too readily associate with the modern world, and with the modern world alone?

But for Gauchet modernity grew within Christianity, the result of the latter's inner logic working itself out historically. Christianity and modernity, far from opposing one another, are historically inseparable—indeed, viewed from Gauchet's elevated perch, they are one and the same phenomenon. Voltaire's *Ecrasez l'infame* becomes, in Gauchet's story, the cry of a confused Christian.

Though related claims have been made by Feuerbach in the nineteenth century, and more recently, by figures as diverse as Karl Löwith and Harvey Cox, Gauchet's analysis is original in its reliance on political anthropology and sociology, where his predecessors wrote in a more philosophical or theological idiom. Moreover, and Gauchet emphasizes this point repeatedly, the disenchantment of the world is not progress, as it would be in Feuerbach, say, but merely a movement toward one pole of the human world, that of human autonomy—no more rational as a solution to the problem of being in the world than the pole of dispossession it leaves behind.

I can offer here only the most cursory summary of those elements within Christianity that lead, in Gauchet's telling, to its undoing. Christ's incarnation—that God was willing to sacrifice his only Son for this world of dust and ashes—gave greater dignity to this world than it had ever received from any other source (a point made, in a very different register, by Michael Novak). Christ's appearance in history meant that no political leader could presume to incarnate the divine, creating the conceptual space needed for political liberty. The Son of Man, a simple carpenter, occupied the bottom of the social hierarchy, not its pinnacle, sowing the seed of human equality that transfigures our societies still. The Christian emphasis on conscience destabilized faith by opening everything to social and individual questioning, making way for philosophical liberalism. The complete transcendence of the Christian God forced men to take responsibility for themselves where God's voice seemed silent, leading to a world of "terrestrial integrity" from which all magic finally fled—the seed of modern science. And so on. Christianity grows a forest of fully autonomous men, men with no need for God. Eventually, Gauchet argues, these Christian ideas, outgrowing their religious "superstructure" (Gauchet uses the Marxist concept of base and superstructure but inverts its meaning), burst it asunder, creating democratic, individualist, and all-too-human societies.

Gauchet traces this history through the ancien régime, the political and religious conflicts surrounding the rise of the Absolutist State, and the revolutionary upheavals of the democratic era. While here his narrative is too abstractly theoretical when it cries out for detail, Gauchet has elsewhere provided more finely grained studies, yet untranslated, exploring the birth of the asylum, the antinomies of political representation in the French Revolution, and the emergence of modern psychiatry in order to put flesh on his theoretical skeleton.

THE BOOK'S final section, "Figures of the Human Subject," depicts post-religious modern man. Some may still believe in God, and even be profoundly religious, Gauchet muses, but this is increasingly a pri-

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vatized faith, as each seeks out what religion can do for him—hence the abundance of New Age spiritualities. According to Gauchet's definition, a religious believer in a democratic society like the United States, who can choose what to believe from among traditional and nontraditional beliefs, already inhabits a post-religious landscape. The relationship to the past that constituted the core of primitive religion finds itself reversed in the modern world; deaf to the call of his predecessors, man now organizes his political, cultural, and economic institutions solely with the future in view. The law of the human world is no longer repetition, but creation, hence the vertiginous agitation of our immensely productive capitalist societies, making today what is obsolete tomorrow.

But the Enlightenment project of human autonomy proves illusory, Gauchet admits. Instead of obeying the other outside of us, as in the era of religion, we rediscover it within, in the unconscious, rendering our own identity opaque. Instead of our desires, wants, and principled beliefs finding perfect representation in the democratic general will, what we discover in our political and economic life is something outside of and distinct from what we sought. Conflict characterizes our democratic politics, and must characterize them lest we succumb to the totalitarian temptation. Our societies explode with individualist demands that only the state answers, so (*pace* libertarians) the more we loosen our morals, the more the state expands. Following the great French liberal Benjamin Constant, Gauchet sees modern man as torn, perpetually dissatisfied, and ironic, and he argues that wisdom lies in recognizing that no perfect solution to the human problem exists. Gauchet's reading of our modern souls often cuts close to the bone. Autonomy is not what the defenders of the Enlightenment hoped it would be.

Gauchet's "political history of religion" thus culminates in a disenchanted liberalism, aware of its failings but convinced that no other viable prospect exists for moderns. We can find much to admire in Gauchet's book. An atheist, he is surprisingly aware that the Western experience cannot be understood without taking Christianity seriously, and he treats it with more respect than do many progressive Christians today. A democrat, he understands that democracy owes much to Christianity, though I don't think he gets the complex story of their tension-filled historical relations exactly right. A modern liberal, he feels the emptiness of modern liberalism far more acutely than, say, John Rawls or Richard Rorty. With all of this, one can have sympathy. But finally his ambition fails.

IT FAILS, I think, for two reasons, one historical, the other a problem of human agency and the Christian possibility, though the first reason relates to the second. Gauchet's interpretation of modernity doesn't do justice either to the founders of modernity or to those Christians who resisted it. By describing the modern world as the inexorable working out of certain ideas, reflected in Christian institutions and beliefs but not fully conscious to moderns or Christians, Gauchet undersells the radical project of modernity. We see this project in Machiavelli's brazen contempt for Christianity in the *Discourses on Livy* and Hobbes' effort to construct an artificial political authority based on the individual, free from the demands of nature or grace, in *Leviathan*. These men, and others who followed them, were not simply dancing to the orders of a structural conductor, a sort of Christian social subconscious existing offstage; they were keenly aware of what they were doing. The modern world was at least in part thought before it became a reality. Gauchet's anthropological reading of Western history, in other words, refuses to take human agency seriously, a fact manifest in the absence in this book of direct engagement with any of the Western tradition's great thinkers. Gauchet seems to stand outside history, outside the world.

Given this refusal, Gauchet, for all the reflection he devotes to Christianity, never considers that Christianity might be true, and that Christians might believe rationally because Jesus Christ revealed the meaning of human history two millennia ago. As Charles Taylor notes in his critical, though admiring, introduction, Gauchet's anthropological reading of religion thus risks reading like "Hamlet without the Prince." The Christian emphasis on conscience, for example, certainly appears in a very different light if Christ indeed brought the truth: the truth calls to man's freedom, but without truth, his freedom is incomplete. In fact, it is no freedom at all.

As a result, Gauchet's interpretation of democratic modernity, despite its philosophical boldness, neglects another possibility: that there might be an answer to our current discontents on the far side of modernity, and one that involves not post-religious man but a post-secular world. A post-secular world would not be a return to some enchanted, primordial dispossession, but it may well be a world after liberalism.

BRIEFLY NOTED

HUXLEY: FROM DEVIL'S DISCIPLE TO EVOLUTION'S HIGH PRIEST. By ADRIAN DESMOND. *Addison-Wesley. 848 pp. $37.50.*

Thomas Henry Huxley more than earned his reputation as "Darwin's Bulldog," yet surprisingly he never fully accepted Darwin's theory of natural selection. He was not convinced that Darwin's innovative mechanism had been confirmed empirically; he felt that Darwin's gradualist approach was a mistake; and he revolted against the implications of evolution for ethics. (He insisted that human society is *from* but not *of* the animal world, with

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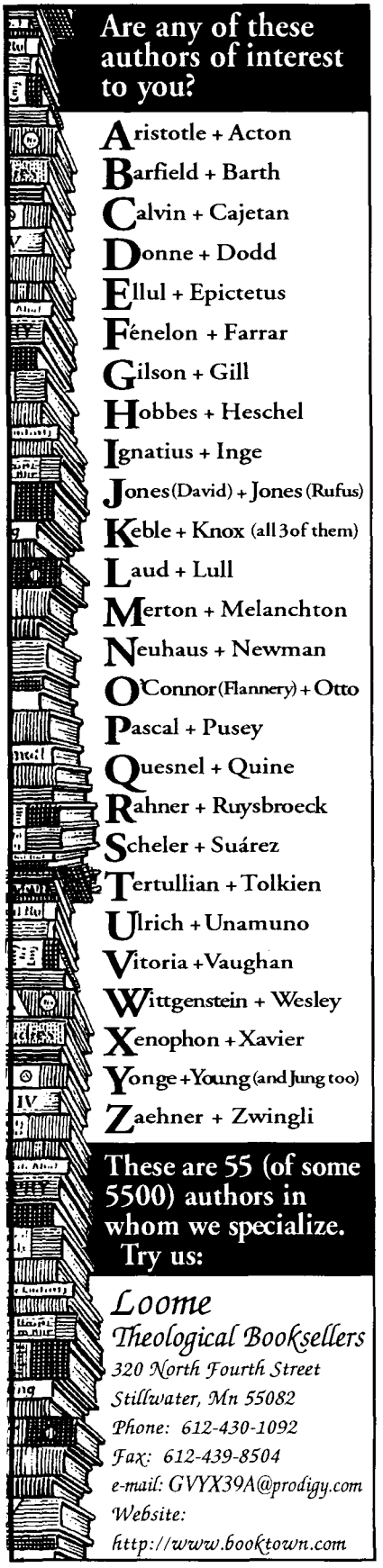

its competition and cruelty.) Given such reservations, what made this pugnacious science popularizer such a gadfly for Darwinism? The answer is that he embraced its underlying philosophy of evolutionary naturalism as politically useful. Huxley originated the myth of a "war" between science and religion, but in reality the war he waged was against the privileges of the aristocracy and the English state church. He used naturalistic science as a battering ram to assault the genteel Anglicanism of the seminaries and universities. Yet Huxley realized that the only way to oust one religion is to replace it with another. And so, while claiming the banner of objectivity and open inquiry, he became adept at using biblical phraseology to form a new orthodoxy. He referred to his lectures as "Lay Sermons," in which he damned his "idolatrous age" for ignoring "the living God thundering from the Sinai of science . . . to worship the golden calf of tradition." He called for a "New Reformation" that would ordain scientists as the elite priesthood of a new religion, leading his contemporaries to dub him "the Apostle Paul of the new teaching" and even "Pope Huxley." The inescapable conclusion from this colorful biography is that, from the beginning, Darwinism has been championed less for its scientific merits than for its usefulness in overthrowing religion and establishing a naturalistic ideology.

— *Nancy R. Pearcey*

HAPPY ALCHEMY: ON THE PLEASURES OF MUSIC AND THEATER. By ROBERTSON DAVIES. Edited by Jennifer Surridge and Brenda Davies. *Viking. 284 pp. $29.95.*

Some Robertson Davies enthusiasts may pick up this collection a little hesitantly, perhaps wishing that there were more of the late great Canadian's novels to read instead. But in fact we find ourselves savoring precisely the same passionate interests and curiosities we know already from his fiction, here in the concise and equally lively form of his talks, addresses, and reviews. As with the previous posthumous anthology, *The Merry Heart* (1996), Davies' shorter pieces are the expression of a life that was essentially religious. Indeed, in one of the book's thirty-three selections ("How to Write a Book") Davies says that to live religiously necessitates being "attentive," "careful," and able "to look at life through eyes that are as clear as one can make them"; the very opposite, in other words, of living "neglectfully." Novels became Davies' metier only after success eluded him as a dramatist; in its focus on the theater *Happy Alchemy* is a return to his first love. Readers who do not know the theater especially well should not be deterred: each selection is richly introduced and illumined by comments from the editors (Davies' wife and daughter) as well as by entries from Davies' own diary. The passion he devoted to his themes and to engaging his varied audiences never fails him or the reader.

— *David Stewart*

PAROCHIAL AND PLAIN SERMONS. By JOHN HENRY NEWMAN. *Ignatius. 1,763 pp. $59.95.*

All eight volumes and all 191 sermons brought together in a book handsome in its printing and binding. As for the quality of these sermons, any comment would be superfluous. Chalk this up as another distinct service rendered by that remarkable outfit, Ignatius Press.

THE VIRTUE OF CIVILITY. By EDWARD SHILS. *Liberty Fund. 395 pp. $16 cloth, $8 paper.*

Selected essays on liberalism, tradition, and civil society by one of the more humane social thinkers of this American century. Shils, who died in 1995, understood that civility is not simple niceness but a virtue difficult to cultivate at any time and especially under the conditions of modernity. These frequently elegant essays lift up an older liberalism that is today often viewed as

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conservative or neoconservative. Shils makes a persuasive case for calling liberalism by its right name, which, contra the collectivists, is not a position of the right.

NEWMAN AND CONVERSION. Edited by IAN KER. *University of Notre Dame Press. 153 pp. $18 paper.*

Issuing from a 1995 conference at Oriel College, Oxford, marking the 150th anniversary of Newman's conversion, the book contains frequently sparkling essays by, inter alia, Sheridan Gilley, Avery Dulles, John Macquarrie, and editor Ker. Required reading for Newman buffs.

MEMOIR ON PAUPERISM. By ALEXIS DE TOCQUEVILLE. *Ivan R. Dee. 84 pp. $6.95 paper.*

A little-known essay by Tocqueville after he visited England and tried to figure out why the most affluent society in Europe had the most paupers, while many impoverished societies apparently had none at all. The problem, he contends, is with England's policy of public charity as a legal right. In her introduction, Gertrude Himmelfarb makes the connections with contemporary debates about poverty and welfare.

ISLAM: A VERY SHORT INTRODUCTION. By MALLISE RUTHVEN. *Oxford University Press. 162 pp. $7.95 paper.*

An admirable idea of Oxford's, these short introductions to huge subjects. The present work covers very nicely, within the limits of its imposed brevity, the beliefs, history, and current state of Islam. Although he thinks more blood is likely to be spilled along the way, the author is a modern optimist in thinking that Muslims will, more or less inevitably, adapt their religion to the peaceful constraints by which the rest of us—meaning those of us who are in charge of the world—abide. It is a much more sanguine and less sanguinary view than that proposed by Samuel Huntington's "clash of civilizations," and one may hope that Mr. Ruthven is right.

CHRISTIANITY IN SOUTH AFRICA: A POLITICAL, SOCIAL, AND CULTURAL HISTORY. Edited by RICHARD ELPHICK and RODNEY DAVENPORT. *University of California Press. 479 pp. $19.95 paper.*

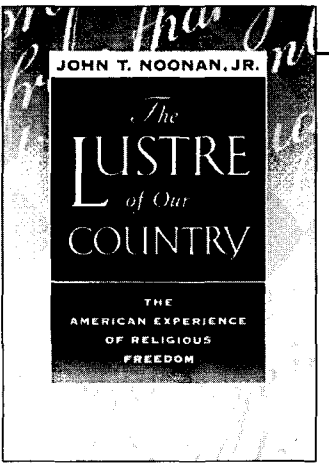
Twenty-five essays covering the wide and dramatic variations of Christian faith and life in South Africa up through the years of apartheid. The book is a welcome antidote to the exclusively political, economic, and ideological ways of telling the story of South Africa. In the past and still today, the forces driving that conflicted and hopeful land cannot be understood apart from the powerful, if often strange, Christian convictions of its peoples. Warmly recommended.

A MORAL VISION FOR AMERICA. By JOSEPH CARDINAL BERNARDIN. Edited by John P. Langan. *Georgetown University Press. 168 pp. $17.95 paper.*

The late Cardinal Bernardin had an inestimable influence in shaping the public witness of the U.S. bishops conference, and this book brings together fifteen of his notable interventions from the 1980s until his death in 1996. Although dealing also with questions such as economics and foreign policy, the addresses focus on the "consistent ethic of life" theme that he first set forth in 1983. The book concludes with his reflection on the "Common Ground Project" that he initiated shortly before his death. In the circumstance of American Catholicism, those on the left celebrated Bernardin as the beard who provided ecclesiastical cover and made more palatable their purposes. Whether that does justice to what Bernardin thought he was doing is another matter. The addresses in this book are marked by intelligence, civility, and a manifestly sincere belief that he was advancing authentic Catholic teaching. They will be chiefly of interest as an important marker in the internal politics of the Church in the U.S.

THE EAST GERMAN CHURCH AND THE END OF COMMUNISM. By JOHN BURGESS. *Oxford University Press. 185 pp. $39.95.*

Working from first-hand sources in East Germany, Burgess describes the heady days when the (mainly) Protestant church provided an opening for resistance to the Communist regime, leading to the liberation of 1989. He notes that the subsequent years have brought disillusionment and deep uncertainty, but ends on the note that Christians once so inspired by the teachings of such as Dietrich Bonhoeffer will surely play a constructive role when the former East Germany finds its future.



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THE POLITICIAN'S GUIDE TO ASSISTED SUICIDE, CLONING, AND OTHER CURRENT CONTROVERSIES. By GEORGE J. MARLIN. *Morley Books (Washington, D.C.). 230 pp. $12.95 paper.*

The first fifty pages of this persuasive book from a new press connected with *Crisis* magazine provide a straightforward and accessible exposition of natural law, laying the foundation for the treatments of sundry controversies that follow. In a relatively short space the author packs an impressive range of authoritative sources and quotations of argumentative force. He asserts effectively his view that capital punishment is required by retributive justice, but he does not engage alternative arguments, such as that of the encyclical *Evangelium Vitae.* Nonetheless, this is a sophisticated primer for politicians who are open to thinking about their calling with moral seriousness.

THE (MAGIC) KINGDOM OF GOD: CHRISTIANITY AND GLOBAL CULTURE INDUSTRIES. By MICHAEL BUDDE. *Westview. 168 pp. $35.*

A professor of political science at DePaul University protests the media and entertainment industries that hold our world in thrall. Salvation from Disney and its demonic company lies in the formation of small countercultural communities of radical discipleship. A familiar analysis and prescription offered from a Catholic perspective.

THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF AMERICAN CATHOLIC HISTORY. Edited by MICHAEL GLAZIER and THOMAS J. SHELLEY. *Michael Glazier/Liturgical Press. 1,567 pp. $79.95.*

A big wonderful jumble of a book, with entries ranging from the masterful to the risible. Yet it undoubtedly fills a void with its thousands of entries on personalities, movements, and controversies that have shaped the Catholic Church in the U.S. On Catholic publications, for instance, *Commonweal* gets a deservedly appreciative notice, while the editors of the *Wanderer* and the *National Catholic Reporter,* at polar ends of Catholic quarrels, get to do the entries on their own publications. Mr. Matt of the *Wanderer* assures us that the paper has rendered an invaluable service and the condition of the Church is looking up, while Mr. Fox of the *Reporter* informs us that John Paul II has "resisted the Church's renewal agenda," while his paper has often been "an isolated voice" in defending it. Monsignor Martin Hellriegel is celebrated as a pioneer of the liturgical renewal endorsed by Vatican II, but there is no mention of his vigorous criticism of the directions that renewal took after the Council. Perhaps in order to include more women, figures such as the artist Corita Kent and the agitprop journalist Penny Lernoux receive attention far beyond their influence. The entry on *Humanae Vitae* tells us that the self-styled orthodox have made it a "litmus test," when everybody knows that, for better and for worse, it is undeniably that. And there are no entries at all for sometimes controversial groups such as Cursillio, Opus Dei, and Focolare. On the other hand, there are numerous articles comparable to Joseph Komonchak's admirably balanced and informative treatment of John Courtney Murray. So is it a must addition to any serious Catholic library? Not quite, but it is a welcome addition, to be used with care.

BIOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARY OF CHRISTIAN MISSIONS. Edited by GERALD H. ANDERSON. *Macmillan. 845 pp. $100.*

A very impressive achievement indeed, the result of years of devoted work by the editor of the *International Bulletin of Missionary Research.* The thousands of entries, which are thoroughly ecumenical and international, make clear that the history of missions is virtually the history of Christianity, an incorrigibly missionary faith. A must for seminary and religious studies libraries, and well worth considering for your local church.

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THE PUBLIC SQUARE

A Continuing Survey of Religion and Public Life

Richard John Neuhaus

The Extraordinary Politics of Alien Citizens

There is the risk of being excessively self-referential, but friends tell me I should respond to this just to keep the record straight. And of course the questions engaged involve many people other than myself. At issue is a very long article in the Winter 1998 issue of that excellent journal *Pro Ecclesia* written by Scott H. Moore, a philosopher at Baylor University, titled "The End of Convenient Stereotypes: How the *First Things* and Baxter Controversies Inaugurate Extraordinary Politics." In fact, in the book *The End of Democracy?* (Spence), I did deal with an earlier unpublished version of Moore's article. But perhaps some additional points are in order.

Readers may recall that the "Baxter controversy" has to do with Father Michael Baxter, a young theologian who is a disciple of Stanley Hauerwas of Duke University and was appointed to the theology department of the University of Notre Dame against the wishes of most of the faculty. There have been exchanges on that controversy in these pages. Moore is sympathetic to the Baxter-Hauerwas position, and believes, with justice, that the controversy exposed the ideological captivity of the Notre Dame theological establishment to a liberalism that cannot countenance a radically Christian challenge to its form of cultural accommodation, and must therefore try to dismiss someone like Baxter as "sectarian." As for the First Things part of his subtitle, Moore is referring of course to the controversy over "the judicial usurpation of politics," and to the attacks by neoconservatives, notably in *Commentary* magazine, on arguments appearing in these pages.

Along the way of his argument, Moore intelligently dissects papers given by Gertrude Himmelfarb and myself at the inauguration of a new president at Baylor University. Both of them were published here under the rubric "The Christian University" (January 1996). He is right in seeing that there is a significant difference between Himmelfarb and myself on the place of religion in the Christian university. Himmelfarb respectfully affirms a "role" for religion within the limits of a university that is defined by terms essentially secular and liberal, whereas I propose that a Christian university is one in which all roles are defined by reference to a Christian understanding of the truth that the university is to serve. This is indeed a very important difference, and Moore is right to see in the Baylor papers the source of the disagreement that later erupted in Himmelfarb's reaction to the FT arguments about judicial usurpation. It is possible that she believes it is illegitimate for religion to challenge the legitimacy of the government, just as it would be illegitimate for religion to challenge the liberal definition of the university. In the case both of higher education and of government, the controlling definition of reality is supplied by liberalism. Within that definition, religion can be tolerated and even celebrated, so long as it is subordinate to the controlling liberal definition.

Moore, however, may be attributing to Himmelfarb a more systematic and rigorous position than she in fact holds. With Hauerwas & Co. he betrays a tendency to reify "liberalism," turning it into a concrete and coherent doctrine far beyond what many who affirm "the liberal tradition" recognize as their own position. This can be useful in teasing out possible implications of a position held by others, but it can also end up by imposing upon them meanings that are not theirs. Moore is right in saying that I want to view Himmelfarb and people of like mind as allies. In fact, they are allies on most of the questions currently contested in our public life. He is wrong in suggesting that I am being "reluctantly" forced to recognize that they are not allies because they are operating on liberal presuppositions that are in irreconcilable conflict with the Christian construal of reality.

On the Way to Perfection

Moore's thesis is that we are in a moment of "extraordinary politics" in which it is being

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"demonstrated that the convenient stereotypes of 'liberal' and 'conservative,' with respect to religion and politics, are now bankrupt." I have always thought that terms such as liberal and conservative are of only limited usefulness. In the 1960s I was called a liberal, and often a radical; from the early 1970s on, I have generally been described as a neoconservative or simply a conservative. Now some of my neoconservative friends worry that I'm reverting to radicalism. My flip response to those who inquire about these "changes" is to quote Cardinal Newman to the effect that to live is to change, and to be perfect is to change often. "Obviously, I'm on my way to perfection," I have said. In a more serious mode, I certainly do not want to deny that I have changed, but I am much more impressed by the continuities than by the discontinuities.

The chief continuity with respect to religion and public life is that I have always believed and believe now that we live in a fallen world that is radically disjointed. There is no one universal discourse that can do justice to the myriad approximations of truth by which people try to make sense of the world. Such a discourse awaits the promised Kingdom of God. Now that promised future is proleptically anticipated in the speaking of the gospel and, most adequately (or least inadequately), in the Church's liturgy. Short of the Kingdom, our public or political task in an inescapably pluralistic world is to find common moral ground for establishing and maintaining a humane life together. Christianity is unique in providing conceptual and practical resources for doing precisely that. In making arguments over the years, I have been ecumenical in enlisting resources as various as the Augustinian "two cities," the Lutheran "twofold kingdom of God," the Calvinist "spheres of sovereignty," the "Christian realism" of Reinhold Niebuhr et al., and the Catholic understanding of the common good grounded in natural law and explicated in the Church's social doctrine. All of these are, I believe, compatible with and supportive of the liberal tradition that I affirm.

If liberalism is understood as Hauerwas & Co. construe it—as upper-case Liberalism, a philosophy that claims to be a neutral and universal discourse that is capable of comprehending and thereby neutralizing all particular discourses—then I am not and never have been a liberal. Such a Liberalism is a snare and delusion, indeed an idolatry, greater than, because more subtle than, Marxist ideology and other madnesses to which human beings succumb when they refuse to live provisionally, which is to say, when they refuse to wait for the promised Kingdom of God. But there is Liberalism, and then there is liberalism.

A Tortured Soul

Prof. Moore speaks of Neuhaus being forced to a "reluctant sectarianism" and of "the depth of the passion of his tortured soul on these questions." He cites my May 1997 article, "The Liberalism of John Paul II":

"This article is critical not only of current defenses, which Neuhaus calls 'distortions,' of Liberalism (like that of Rawls and Dworkin) but also of current critiques of Liberalism (like that of Hauerwas and MacIntyre). Neuhaus is clearly calling for the Church to engage in an extraordinary politics of a sort, though he mistakenly thinks it can be achieved through the attempt to 'reappropriate and rebuild the liberal tradition.' Neuhaus understands this endeavor as 'contending for the soul of the liberal tradition.' However, to understand oneself as 'contending for the soul of the liberal tradition' is already to have placed oneself against and outside of Liberalism. This 'tradition,' so-called, is one which denies the very idea of soul and which has lived and died on the assumption that it is *not* the embodiment of a tradition but rather of those neutral, self-evident realities the recognition of which is necessary to sustain a rather truncated version of human freedom in society. Neuhaus certainly recognizes this difficulty even if he thinks it might be accomplished through a reinvigorated Liberalism."

Prof. Moore is over-excited. I have never subscribed to what he means by upper-case Liberalism, and certainly do not want to reinvigorate it. I have written at length, not least in *The Naked Public Square,* in criticism of the various "monisms," including secular liberal monisms, that deny the provisional and pluralistic character of existence before the eschatological End Time. Only in the academic precincts of political philosophy, jurisprudence, and theological ethics does one find people who inflate Liberalism or Conservatism into veritable religions over which they exercise the passions of their tortured souls. I am quite entirely untroubled by the claim that my defense of the liberal tradition is "against and outside of Liberalism." I have never sworn allegiance to the religion of Liberalism. By the liberal tradition I mean something quite modest but nonetheless of great value. Indeed it is valuable precisely because it is modest.

The liberal tradition that I would defend is a set of sensibilities, habits, and institutions such as those exemplified, however imperfectly, in the American experiment. Respect for the dignity of the person, human rights, tolerance, limited government, the rule of law, checks and balances, ordered liberty—these are among the key components of the liberalism that I believe is affirmed also by John Paul II. I develop this understanding of liberalism more fully in "Christianity and Democracy" (October 1996), which begins with the statement: "Jesus Christ is Lord. That is the first and final assertion Christians make about all of reality, including politics. Believers now assert by faith what

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one day will be manifest to the sight of all: every earthly sovereignty is subordinate to the sovereignty of Jesus Christ." That, I would insist, is not "sectarian" but is the firmest foundation of the liberal democratic tradition. People like Rawls and Dworkin say it is sectarian, but I don't know why Christians such as Scott Moore should concede the point.

Smiting the Enemy

Similarly, the 1991 encyclical *Centesimus Annus* argues that democracy is only secure when it is grounded in the deepest convictions, including religious convictions, of the people. When the question of truth is excluded and democracy is reduced to allegedly neutral principles and procedures, says John Paul, it can easily turn into "thinly disguised totalitarianism." Exactly right. Moore says that this argument is "against and outside of Liberalism." So much the worse for Liberalism. He and others have charged that in the article he cites I am in fact using a conservative argument to defend liberalism. There may be something to that. In the article, I discuss why it is that those who defend the liberal tradition along the lines I suggest are today often called conservative. The point is that the sensibilities and institutions that I designate as "the liberal tradition" can be defended on a number of grounds, and I believe with John Paul II that the strongest ground for its defense is biblical faith. I understand why this argument is problematic for liberal secularists—and for Christian thinkers who recognize only the Liberalism that is a comprehensive belief system incompatible with Christian faith.

I cheer wholeheartedly an Alasdair MacIntyre who pricks the pretensions of that Liberalism when it claims to be a universal discourse above the fray of contending traditions. He masterfully exposes such Liberalism as but another "rival tradition," and not the most impressive of traditions by any means. I wish him many years of smiting the enemy hip and thigh. Such intellectual battles are of great importance. But there is a problem when Hauerwas & Co. conflate that Liberalism with the liberal tradition under discussion here. Surely they are connected, both historically and conceptually, but distinctions are in order. The Enlightenment Liberal Tradition against which my friend Hauerwas rails is mainly, although not entirely, confined to textbooks. It is—or at least it was until the advent of sundry postmodernisms—the regnant and frequently oppressive philosophy in some institutions, notably in the university and the courts. The liberal tradition that I defend, on the other hand, is a lived experience largely outside the world defined by textbooks. It is the institutions, sensibilities, and habits that characterize, for instance, the American experiment as actually experienced. It, too, has its classic texts. Tocqueville provided one of the greatest; Reinhold Niebuhr and John Courtney Murray provided others. And, although by no means limited to its American version, John Paul has provided a powerful defense of the experiment for our time in, among other texts, *Centesimus Annus*.

Against the World

Like Hauerwas, Baxter, Moore, and others, I believe that Christianity is inherently countercultural. Every culture contains within it the temptation to commit an act of closure, to assume that it is or that it can become the culmination of history. Put differently, every culture is tempted to make an idol of itself. Against that danger, Christianity stands in eschatological resistance—declaring to the world, "Repent, for the Kingdom of God is at hand!" It frankly astonishes me when critics suggest that I do not understand that, for it has been such a persistent theme in my writing and speaking of the past three decades.

Raising the question of the moral legitimacy of government is not something I first did in 1996 in connection with the judicial usurpation of politics. In *Movement and Revolution*, I examined governmental legitimacy and the advocacy of revolutionary change in the light of the Christian criteria for just war. That was published in 1969. In *Freedom for Ministry* (1979)—which Hauerwas has kindly called the best book available on the subject of Christian ministry—the central proposition is that the minister is "the ambassador of a disputed sovereignty." The title of *Against the World for the World* (1976) speaks for itself. That argument is developed with specific reference to the American experiment in *Time Toward Home* (1976) and *America Against Itself* (1992). But I go on, as God knows I have gone on over the years, leaving a paper trail of more than twenty-five books and somewhere around a thousand published articles.

Whether my subject is ministry, liturgy, ecclesiology, ecumenism, medical ethics, church-state law, or politics, always the theme is oppositional or, if you will, dialectical—always the "now" of history and the "not yet" of eschatological promise, always the sacred absolute challenging the profanely idolatrous, always the interplay of the critically affirmative and affirmatively critical. But still I read things such as Prof. Moore's assertion that my "tortured soul" is being reluctantly forced to the recognition that there is perhaps a tension between Christian truth and the world as defined by secular liberalism. Others go further, claiming that my driving devotion is to a certain politics, and my purpose is to enlist the Church and its theology in service to that political vision. What is one to say? I can only say again—I hope not in tones too defensive—that I am first and foremost and always a

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Christian and a priest. What I do at the altar and in the confessional and in the pulpit is of immeasurably greater significance than anything I do in the public arena. For me, the Real Presence of the crucified and risen Lord in the Eucharist is the *axis mundi* upon which turns all that is or ever will be; it is, as Dante saw, the love that moves the sun and all the other stars.

The First Thing

In the premier issue of this journal of religion and public life, we declared our editorial purpose, asserting that "the first thing to be said about public life is that public life is not the first thing." That means that politics—whether of the left or of the right or of stripes unspecifiable—is not the first thing. The only politics that can ultimately claim our allegiance is the authentically new politics, the right ordering of all things, in the promised rule of God. What, then, is the difference between Hauerwas & Co. and myself? More important than any difference, and yet inseparably related to our difference, is our agreement that the second century *Letter to Diognetus* got it right in describing the awkward circumstance of Christians in any earthly polis: "Though they are residents at home in their own countries, their behavior there is more like that of transients; they take their full part as citizens, but they also submit to anything and everything as if they were aliens. For them, any foreign country is a homeland, and any homeland a foreign country."

We are alien citizens, and my difference with some others who assert that with equal urgency is that I believe *both* words must be underscored. I, too, hang my harp on the willows and weep by the rivers of Babylon, asking, "How can we sing the songs of Zion in a foreign land?" But we do sing them. Unlike some who sing the songs of Zion, I do not desire countercultural confrontation, and have no appetite for jousting with a Liberalism that exists chiefly in the intellectual backwater that is the contemporary academy. I want to make the best of our unsatisfactory circumstance, knowing that all circumstances are unsatisfactory short of the Kingdom. I discern in liberal democracy and in the American version of it a foreign country where one can be more at home, however provisionally, than in other homelands that are away from home. All in all and considering the alternatives, this American experiment is worthy of our devotion. It is a devotion sharply qualified by the awareness that this is not home. And by the awareness that it is a nation "under God," which means, first of all, a nation under judgment.

Jeremiah had it right: "Seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare." I don't think it serves any useful purpose to keep announcing to our fellow citizens that we are aliens and exiles, that we don't really belong here, and that we hold their city in contempt. Moreover, it is unseemly for Christians to be rudely saying such things while, at the same time, we enjoy all the rights and benefits of the city. It is our city as much as it is their city, and we should, as in second-century Rome, take our full part as citizens—all the time telling our fellow citizens that they, too, are exiles, that they, too, have another and an infinitely better home.

True, it may happen, as has so often happened in history, that the city will turn against us. Then we must be prepared for resistance and, ultimately, for martyrdom. It could, God forbid, happen in this foreign country and homeland that is America. The judicial usurpation of politics is an ominous sign that it may be happening here. If it comes to that, however, it must never be by our choice. It is also the case that the city can turn against us in more insidious ways, especially a city so rich and splendid in appearance as this. It can seduce us into thinking that this really is our home. Therefore we must always keep our countercultural witness honed, even as we seek the welfare of the city, and precisely because that witness serves the welfare of the city. Being alien citizens is an exceedingly awkward and complicated business, and Christians will likely never get it entirely right until our exile is ended, and then we won't have to worry about it any more.

Home Away from Home

Along the way to that final homecoming, there will continue to be controversies great and small, such as that over Baxter and First Things. Please don't get me wrong: Scott Moore's analysis of these controversies is intelligent and clearly intended to be sympathetic. But the "extraordinary politics" to which he refers is ever so much more extraordinary than his article suggests. It is the politics of the Kingdom in judgment and support of this and every earthly polis. He speaks of the end of the stereotypes of "liberal" and "conservative," but the importance he attributes to that reflects another stereotype, namely, that terms such as "liberal" and "conservative" have defined the significant differences among Christians who write about public affairs. For many people those are no doubt the terms that matter most. Too bad for them.

Prof. Moore is mistaken in thinking they are terms that have mattered much to me. In saying this I am not adopting the posture of "beyond liberal and conservative," which is a common rhetorical ploy employed by both right and left and is a sneaky claim to that neutrality of which upper-case Liberalism falsely boasts. No, in my defense of the liberal tradition I generally find myself these days in the company of those who call themselves conservative, and for the most part it is very good company, even if

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some of them think I am an unreliable ally, what with all this talk about moral truth, natural law, and even, would you believe it, the coming rule of God. They will just have to get used to it. The Christians and, for that matter, the believing Jews are not going to go away. We have nowhere to go, except home; and the timing of that transition is not under our control.

But it is a stereotype of a stereotype to think, as Scott Moore does, that the significance of the current controversies is that they move us beyond the stereotypes of liberal and conservative. In addressing specific issues and arguments, we will continue to find ourselves allied with those who agree, and it is inevitable that people will put names on these alliances. But live long enough and you learn that all such alliances and labels are contingent and temporary. It is true that for many people "liberalism" or "conservatism" (or variations thereon) is the name of their church, which is a pity. For those who have the Church that is not the case, for by faith's anticipation the Church really is home away from home, a community of exiles who are eager to serve the earthly city, and in no way serve it better than in reminding it that it is not the final destination, that it is not the City of God.

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FURTHER NOTES ON THE CUBAN REVOLUTIONS

Here are a few little items retrieved from the cutting room floor, as it were, that didn't make it into my article on "The Cuban Revolutions" in the last issue. • At several points the Pope underscored that Cuba is part of *Latin* America, and other Latin American countries have a special obligation to help out a country of "the same Christian heritage and the same language." The unity of Latin America, counterbalancing the colossus of the North, was also a not-so-subliminal point at the Synod for America held in Rome at the end of 1997, on which I am now writing a book. This theme may ruffle U.S. sensibilities, but it is understandable and probably healthy in a world so dominated by one country. • In his "Message to Youth" issued in Cuba, John Paul urged young people not to succumb to "alcoholism, drugs, sexual irresponsibility, and prostitution, the constant pursuit of new experiences." Then he added, "Do not take refuge in sects, alienating spiritualist cults, or groups that are completely foreign to the culture and tradition of your country." The synod in Rome had proposed that other Christian groups no longer be called "sects," and the Pope had a most cordial meeting with such groups while in Cuba, so he probably didn't have them in mind. "Spiritualist cults" might refer to Santeria, but Santeria is far from being "completely foreign to the culture and tradition" of Cuba. Santeria is a complex mix of Christianity and African religions in which the Blessed Virgin and other saints have their counterparts in the gods and goddesses of rivers, fertility, iron, and the such. The Santeria priests, or babalaos, were for a time favored by the Castro regime against the Catholics. Some say a majority of Catholics in Cuba also practice Santeria, but a bishop tells me that is greatly exaggerated. Babalaos complained that Santeria had no formal part in the Pope's visit and that they were not invited to the "ecumenical encounter" on the final day. Jaime Cardinal Ortega of Havana explained: "They are baptized Christians, and we cannot engage in ecumenism with a part of the Catholic Church itself. The Church has always integrated popular religiosity, never excluded it, and this would be a way of excluding it." The official word for such integration is "inculturation," and in Cuba inculturation gives new meaning to James Joyce's observation that the Catholic Church is "here comes everybody." • A regular part of the Pope's pastoral visits is time spent with the sick and suffering. This time it was at St. Lazarus Hospice in Havana, which is run by the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul. "I come as a pilgrim of truth and hope to this Shrine of St. Lazarus," he said, "as one who experiences in his own flesh the meaning and value which suffering can have when it is accepted by drawing near in trust to God who is rich in mercy." The theme of participating with others in the redemptive suffering of Christ has become more pronounced in John Paul's statements of recent years. • A choral group of about twenty young people attended a Mass said by Cardinal Law of Boston and one evening he invited them back to the sumptuous Cohiba Hotel for soft drinks and dinner. This was a world they had never seen and, with youthful exuberance, they took over the large bar area and then the dining room, belting out hymns, including, in Spanish, a jubilant "Hallelujah Chorus." The choir director was an elderly nun who had lived through the decades of oppression and defection from the Church. "The children!" she exclaimed with tears in her eyes. "I prayed and I knew it would happen. It is a miracle!" Laughter and tears were general in that memorable moment. • One afternoon an evangelical minister, a Baptist, tells me about the oldline groups in Cuba, such as the Methodists. "They have very few people, but for a long time they were the only religious people Fidel would talk with. Maybe some of them went too far in cooperating in our oppression, but they had the connections, also in the U.S. God can use them, too." He adds that it used to be the evangelicals who

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were stronger in resisting the regime, "But now it is the Catholics. And especially now with the Pope coming. But it makes no difference who gets the credit. It is all for the gospel of Jesus, and I don't think things can go back to the way they were for any of us." • Back home there were other things happening around the Pope's visit, apart from the shameful debacle of the American presidency. The National Council of Churches, United Methodists, and Presbyterian Church (USA) joined in a coalition with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce to lobby for a complete lifting of sanctions against the Castro regime. The coalition's statement at the time of the visit blamed the U.S. for bad relations with Cuba and made no mention of the regime's suppression of religious, political, and civil rights, which is perhaps understandable in the case of the Chamber of Commerce. The *Wall Street Journal*, of course, has long opposed the embargo. The advocacy brings together an interesting mix of left-leaning religionists and business leadership. Christians in Cuba worry that simply lifting the sanctions without any quid pro quo will economically strengthen Castro, providing him resources to pay the military enforcers of his police state. The Cuban people, they fear, would become cheap labor for the Yanqui capitalists, with the regime taking the money and paying off workers with soap, toothpaste, and other necessities in short supply. On a smaller scale, it would be a deal similar to that struck between U.S. business and the regime in China. But then, the National Council and its member churches are marvelously insouciant about the denial of religious, political, and civil rights in China as well. • And this should be mentioned: Neither I nor the others in our company encountered even one Cuban who had a bad word for America. This is remarkable when one considers that for nearly forty years they have been incessantly indoctrinated in hatred for the United States. Their admiration for America and things American may be in part the "consumerist obsession" against which the Holy Father rightly warns. But people who are hungry for both bread and freedom, and maybe a circus or two to relieve the doldrums of decades, should be cut some slack. A modicum of material well-being is not consumerism, and the desire for it is not an obsession. After the passing of the Marxist madness, the task will be to bring the Cuban people into "the circle of productivity and exchange" (*Centesimus Annus*) in the hope that they will one day be fortunate enough to face the moral challenge of the consumer society. The Pope is certainly right to alert them to that challenge in advance. For the foreseeable future, however, consumerism—understood as inordinate concern for things material—will be driven by extreme deprivation. • I also didn't get into that article the sad news about cigars. My friends and I checked them out, as any sensible person who is even an occasional cigar smoker would. Some of the more expensive were so-so, and a box of more moderately priced specimens were so tightly packed as to be totally unsmokeable. After Fidel's conquest, Cuban seed was taken to the Dominican Republic and elsewhere, producing cigars that are better and more reasonably priced, and readily available in the U.S. At least that is the conclusion of our avid, albeit unscientific, research. I suppose some will count that as one less reason for lifting the embargo. • Given the political disarray in this country, it seems little will be done about the embargo any time soon. More important and immediate than the embargo question, I was impressed by the way that U.S. pilgrims to Cuba—including cardinals, bishops, and many priests—evinced a sense of urgency about ongoing and very practical work with the Cuban Church. Of course that bonding, as it is called, between North American and Latin American bishops was evident also at the synod in Rome, but Latin America is an impossibly big and diffuse reality. Despite the oppressive state, Cuba seems more manageable, a place where little things could make a large difference. Already people are planning return visits and creating new channels of aid and cooperation. That, too, is a difference made by the visit of John Paul II. • There are other items on the cutting room floor, but enough. As I said in last month's article, the real revolution in Cuba is now just beginning.

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THERE WAS A *TIME*

Time magazine celebrated its 75th birthday with a spectacular bash at Radio City Music Hall. According to our local paper, it seemed everyone was there except the Pope and Queen Elizabeth, both of whom had been invited. The stars of the occasion, apart from the magazine itself, were all the people who had ever been on the cover of *Time*, which does not include me. Although Claire Boothe Luce did once tell me, "It's so sad Harry isn't here. He would have put you on the cover just as he did for Father Murray." She was referring to John Courtney Murray, of course, and, even if she didn't mean it, it was nice of her to say it. Many years ago, Malcolm Muggeridge referred to the cover of *Time* as "the most coveted stained glass window of contemporary culture."

That was a long time ago. When I was in college in the late fifties, *Time* was a major point of reference. I recall that a young prof at that Texas institution learned that I read *Time* every week, and cover to cover. He was mightily impressed. It

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established my reputation as the resident intellectual. Even in the seventies, editors and writers and academics frequently talked about what *Time* said about this or that. That was a long time ago.

Time has been radically dumbed down, and has cut back on the "grey matter," meaning actual text, that interrupts the flow of advertisements. It now seems more or less indistinguishable from *People* and hundreds of other magazines on the racks, many of them generated by the publishing empire that *Time* became. I am occasionally faxed Charles Krauthammer's excellent columns that still appear there. No doubt there are other good things that appear from time to time. But nobody mentions them, and in this business, for better or worse, what gets mentioned is generally thought worthy of mention. Of general interest publications, for instance, must reading includes the *New York Times*, above all, then *Commentary, National Review, The New Republic, the Weekly Standard,* probably the *New York Review of Books,* and from there one moves on to more specialized, and generally more interesting, things.

But back to *Time*'s birthday party. The picture in the *Times* caught Raquel Welch and Dr. Jack Kevorkian being most convivial. Henry Kissinger was there, as were General William Westmoreland, Robert McNamara, John F. Kennedy, Jr., and of course Bill Clinton. Gorbachev flew in from Vienna. Other participants: Joe DiMaggio, Louis Farrakhan, Anita Hill, Imelda Marcos, and Leni Riefenstahl, the Nazi propagandist. John Kennedy toasted McNamara for admitting he was wrong about Vietnam and thus helping him, Kennedy, bear the tragic burdens of life. The toast does not bear close parsing. The Rev. Jerry Falwell was pressing the flesh of thousands, and Muhammad Ali had a few gracious words of benediction. And so it went.

The editors of *Time* are not in the business of making, as they say, value judgments. I wonder if they invited Saddam Hussein. I was impressed by the feting of "Dr. Death" Kevorkian. Had history turned out somewhat differently, one could imagine the presence of Wilhelm Himmler, chancellor of Germany and grandson of the other Himmler who, as *Time* might put it, was the mastermind of Germany's "controversial population policy in the 1940s." But how could they not have invited Dr. Kevorkian if they were going to invite the Rev. Falwell? After all, Kevorkian's approval ratings in the country are higher than Falwell's. Inviting one and not the other would have required (gasp) a moral judgment. But the invitation list, as I understand it, included everyone who made the cover. I am told that Adolf Hitler once made it. My hunch is that Henry Luce, who was not averse to moral judgment, would not have invited him. Mrs. Luce was right: It is sad that Harry isn't here. Not because I might have been on the cover of *Time*. Although that would be a kick, and even more of a kick to decline the dubious honor and refuse to cooperate with the writing of the cover story. And not because Henry Luce was right about everything, which he wasn't. But because he knew it is an editor's job to make moral judgments, which includes deciding what, and who, is beyond the pale. On the other hand, the President of these United States pronounced the party a "swell affair," and who am I to disagree with the President?

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THEOLOGY TO PRAY BY

When anyone asks who is doing really interesting work in theology these days, the name of Robert Jenson of St. Olaf College in Minnesota is always on the short list. He is a frequent contributor to these pages, and his article "How the World Lost Its Story" (October 1993) is, in my judgment, one of the finest pieces of theology we've published. Now the first volume of his systematic theology is out, and I am somewhat late in drawing attention to it (*Systematic Theology: The Triune God,* Oxford University Press, 244 pp., $49.95). It is a relatively short book of a projected two-volume work, as distinct from the three volumes that is usual for systematic theologies. It is also very tightly packed, a demanding read for the specialist and nonspecialist alike. But it very much rewards the effort.

I have often found that the reading of rigorous theology is a much richer devotional experience than the reading of books intended to be devotional. That is even more the case with the explosion of pap "spiritualities" in recent years. Jenson is nothing if not rigorous, although his elliptical style frequently leaves the reader groping for connections. They are there to be found, however. Jenson has a fine grasp of the biblical and patristic materials, and he is solidly situated within the history of modern theology, with figures such as Schleiermacher, Barth, and Pannenberg playing featured roles. Unusual for contemporary theologians, he is much influenced by the eighteenth-century Jonathan Edwards, and some readers will discern a strong affinity with Hans Urs von Balthasar. Jenson is a Lutheran of the evangelical catholic variety, although some Lutheran theologians think, with justice, that he is more Catholic than Lutheran.

This first volume is divided into three parts: "Prolegomena," "The Triune Identity," and "The Triune Character." The first part is a splendid statement of what theology is about and a critique of

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its current practice. "Theology is the Church's enterprise of thought and the only Church conceivably in question is the unique and unitary Church of the creeds," Jenson writes. As the titles of the second two parts indicate, the God in *theo*logy is the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit who is also—and this is crucially important to his argument—the God of Israel. In a footnote (many of his most incisive statements are in footnotes) the connection is underscored: "There is no reason for the Church to think that contemporary Judaism has a prior right to the use or interpretation of the Old Testament. Some of our difficulty arises from the supposition that the Church once 'appropriated' or 'adopted' Israel's Scriptures; since the origin of the Church depended on these Scriptures, such an event can never have happened. Moreover, since what is now called Judaism and the Church appeared simultaneously within Israel, neither can have a prior claim; even from a strictly historical point of view, the one is as immediate and direct a continuation of canonical Israel as the other."

Central to Jenson's brief is that, in Christian theology, the doctrine of God is inescapably trinitarian. That may seem obvious, but he rightly notes that many theologians first attend to the doctrine of God and then move on to the question of the Trinity. This, he contends, is to get everything backwards. It results in establishing a philosophical and essentially non-Christian notion of deity to which Christian particularities, such as the Triune Identity, must then be fitted. God *is* Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and vice versa. Thus, unlike most systematic theologies, the first volume includes the doctrine of Christ (Christology) and of the Holy Spirit (Pneumatology) under the doctrine of God. While greatly indebted to Karl Barth (as any contemporary theologian almost has to be), Jenson cannot easily be dismissed as an anti-philosophical "Barthian." In fact, he insists that Barth was not an enemy of philosophy but simply wanted to do philosophy as a Christian. While he is at it, Jenson tries to make the case that worthies such as Thomas Aquinas shared his (and Barth's) belief that there is no knowledge of God apart from the Triune Identity. It will be interesting to see what scholars of Thomas make of that effort.

There are many pieces to Jenson's argument, many of them suggestive, and some clearly intended to be provocative. At the epicenter of the book is the claim that time and eternity are not antithetical, that time is of the very being of the eternal God. Here he respectfully takes issue with the great Augustine. "It is hard to see," Augustine wrote, "how God creates temporal things and events without temporal movement in himself." But there is temporal movement within himself, Jenson contends. That is the whole point of God as Trinity. Augustine's "misstep," he believes, is that, in trying to square Greek metaphysics with biblical narrative, he finally opted for the timeless deity of the Greeks. "With the hindsight of our position in history," Jenson writes, "we are here faced with a straightforward theological choice. *At this precise point*, the Western tradition must simply be corrected" (emphasis in original). The Christian God of movement and temporality is most aptly understood in analogy with music. There are three singers who each take their part, as in a fugue. Especially striking in his discussion of the interaction among the three Persons of the Trinity is the reflection on the Holy Spirit's offering and the Father accepting the death of the Son. Here the echoes of Balthasar are especially strong.

This is an ambitious book. Some might say it is a presumptuous book, so frontal is its assault on some conventional ways of thinking. But Jenson would insist that we should not equate orthodoxy with the conventional. His intention is determinedly orthodox. He does not understand himself as a maverick but as a faithful servant of the Church attending to its task of thinking. He acknowledges that, if the Church is to defend its scripture and tradition from maverick interpretations, there must be an authoritative voice that can speak for and to the Church, and he does not hesitate to call this voice a "magisterium." He then adds, "To affirm this, we need not yet commit ourselves about a mandated or appropriate *location* of teaching authority." Those who attend to Jenson and his enterprise will no doubt make a note of that "not yet." Meanwhile, *Systematic Theology: The Triune God* is that rare gift, an exercise in theological thought that is both adventuresome and rigorous. And wonderfully devotional.

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ECUMENICAL ANXIETIES

For more than four centuries, many Protestants have contended that *the* question dividing them from Roman Catholics is justification by grace through faith. Such Protestants have typically described that formulation as "the article by which the Church stands or falls." After years of work under the auspices of the Lutheran World Federation and the Pontifical Council for Christian Unity, Catholic and Lutheran theologians have produced a Joint Declaration on Justification. The Declaration is strongly supported by Rome and has been generally well received by the member churches of the LWF. It was overwhelmingly approved by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) at its 1997

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assembly. At the beginning of this year, however, 150 German theologians, some of them very prominent, issued a statement asserting that the Declaration does not represent the consensus that is claimed. I asked the distinguished Lutheran theologian, Professor Wolfhart Pannenberg of the University of Munich, to comment on these developments. Readers will recognize that this discussion has a bearing also on developments here, such as the statement "The Gift of Salvation" published in our January issue. Let me add the caution that Prof. Pannenberg's comment is very tightly packed and may present some difficulty for readers unfamiliar with the Joint Declaration and the full critique of the German theologians.

For a long time, opposition to Roman Catholicism functioned in the minds of many Protestants as a mark of identity of their faith. In the ecumenical climate after Vatican II that seemed to recede to a past age. But the statement of some 150 German theologians rejecting the Joint Declaration on Justification proposed by the LWF and the Vatican Council on Unity indicates that the past is not yet dead.

The second of seven articles of the statement opposes the claim that a consensus has been obtained in fundamental points of the doctrine. According to the statement, there is no consensus on justification through the word of God and "by faith alone," no consensus on the certitude of faith concerning our salvation, no consensus on the continuing sinfulness of the justified, nor on the importance of good works for our salvation, nor on the function of the doctrine of justification as criterion of the entire life and doctrine of the church. With regard to the relationship of Law and Gospel the obtained consensus is said to be defective. Are these negative judgments substantial?

The Joint Declaration, with Paul, calls the gospel a message that conveys justification (e.g.. Romans 3:21-31). It affirms that justification is obtained through faith in the Gospel of the Son of God. We are justified through Christ alone, when we receive salvation in faith. How can it be said, then, that there is no consensus on justification as obtained through the Word and through faith?

A consensus on justification by faith alone is said to be missing. The Joint Declaration emphasizes, however, that God accepts us by grace alone through faith in Christ's saving deed and not on the basis of our merit. Does the word "alone" in this phrase refer only to grace and not also to faith? In any event, the Declaration here says without any restriction that the sinner is justified through faith in God's saving action in Christ. In this sentence, faith is characterized in a quite comprehensive way as the one medium for receiving justification. This is remarkably different from certain earlier formulations of the Roman Catholic doctrine on this point, where faith was considered only the beginning and root of justification. It is true that the explicit formula "by faith alone" is characterized in the next paragraph as the specifically Lutheran expression of this doctrine, but there is no intimation of any substantial difference with what was stated just before. To the contrary, the Joint Declaration obviously intends that the Lutheran formula expresses the same doctrine. After all, Paul himself did not explicitly use the word "alone" in Romans 3:28, though Luther was certainly correct in affirming that this was the implication of Paul's words.

What about the certainty of salvation? The Council of Trent rejected the doctrine of the Reformation at this point, because it took it as claiming certainty about one's personal state of grace. The Reformation doctrine, however, did not intend an assessment of our human situation, but focused on the certainty of God's promise. This being generally acknowledged now, the Joint Declaration says that believers can rely on God's effective promise in word and sacrament and thus be certain of his grace. On behalf of Roman Catholic doctrine, too, it is said to be impossible to believe firmly in God while at the same time doubting his promises. Where, then, is the remaining controversy in this matter?

The statement of the 150 German theologians also denies a consensus on faith and works. The Joint Declaration says on this issue that good works "follow" from justification. This was never denied by the Reformation. One has to distinguish, but must not separate, good works from justification. Both sides agree that nothing preceding or following the "free gift of faith" merits justification. This being said, the fact that Catholics retain the traditional designation of "merit" regarding the biblically attested "reward" of our good works by God becomes a matter of language only, not of doctrinal disagreement.

With regard to all these issues that were hotly debated at the time of the Reformation, the Joint Declaration not only claims, but explicitly formulates, a doctrinal consensus. The statement of the 150 offers no argument why the consensus on these points is defective or even nonexistent. It simply says that there is no real consensus on these issues. But in the absence of any argument, how can serious theologians, after carefully reading the Joint Declaration, subscribe to its rejection? Under these circumstances, is that not simply testimony to unreconciled prejudice?

It is true that there are some other points where differences remain, contrary to the claims of the Joint Declaration. The first of these is the unfortunate expression introduced in the last revision of the document on the function of the doctrine on justification as "criterion" of all other doctrine and of the life of the church itself. Note 18

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now says that for Lutherans it is the only such criterion, while Catholics are said to be also bound by other criteria. What are these other criteria? If it were the confession of Nicea in A.D. 325 to the substantial unity of the Son with the Father, there need not be much dispute. But in the absence of any indication concerning the content of those additional criteria, suspicions easily arise. If, e.g., papal infallibility were to be claimed as one such criterion, agreement would become difficult.

Another point of continuing disagreement concerns the presence of sin in those who have received justification by faith and baptism. Here the Catholic side simply reiterates the claim of Trent that concupiscence in the baptized Christian is no longer sin in the full sense of the word, which is hard to reconcile with the authority of Paul and of Augustine. On the other hand, the Lutheran formula of the believer to be righteous and sinner at the same time is not to be found in Paul either. At this point, then, the need for further dialogue is obvious.

The remaining differences, however, should not obscure the fact that agreement has been obtained on some of the most hotly debated issues in the doctrine on justification, especially concerning the role of faith and concerning the certitude of salvation as based on God's promise. The agreement on these issues should be gratefully accepted by the churches. It is an encouragement to proceed further through similar agreements on the Eucharist and on the ministry of the church. The recent German statement expresses Protestant anxieties that such an ecumenical agenda may end up in Lutheranism being swallowed completely into the "hierarchical structure" of the Roman Catholic Church. But the declared aim of the ecumenical process is rather communion among churches, or, as Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger has phrased it, "remaining churches while becoming one church."

FT

SCIENCE, GREED, AND JUSTICE: AN UNBEATABLE COMBINATION

News reports of the last several months freshly impress upon the mind the bright prospects for the human future now that science, greed, and justice have joined forces against the wickedness of the cigarette industry. Documents recently released powerfully reinforce the allegation that the millions of dollars spent on advertising by R. J. Reynolds had the clear purpose of increasing sales. Not only that, but increased sales now have been definitely linked to the actual use of the product. Moreover, recent studies indicate decisively that most users also inhale. The evidence against the tobacco companies does not stop there. Internal memos have come to light showing that tobacco executives have conspired to make a product that is more attractive to the customer. Of course the industry denies any intention to give customers what they want or to encourage a demand for its product.

Members of Congress have declared themselves shocked by revelations that the industry, not content with having sold trillions of cigarettes in the past, is clearly planning to maintain and even expand its market in the future. A whistle-blower in the industry has leaked to the House Committee on Protecting People from Themselves conclusive documentation that the tobacco companies have engaged in market research, which is paid for by profits made from selling cigarettes. It is now revealed that the strategy of the tobacco giants is premised upon the finding that younger people have, on average, a longer future than older people. There is no doubt, say members of the committee, that the industry's market plans for the future are geared to the people who are more likely to be around in the future. Said committee chairperson Elsa Comstock, "This new evidence provides the smoking gun we've been looking for. The industry's strategy is to give people a choice, and then hope they will choose to buy its products. In all my years in Congress, I have never seen such a flagrant attempt to stay in business."

New legislation is almost certain to require the manufacturers to include in their advertising stronger messages discouraging the purchase or use of their product. Support for such legislation is reinforced by scientific research of recent years showing that cigarette smoking is unhealthy. This is a dramatic change from the widespread assumption of the past hundred years or more that smoking cigarettes is a remedy for respiratory problems and one of the surest ways to extend life expectancy. In the view of scientific experts, the recent findings vindicate what used to be the minority opinion of those who referred to cigarettes as "coffin nails" and who otherwise challenged what were commonly viewed as the health benefits of smoking. "Seldom in history," said former nanny general Dr. Ever Kook, "have we witnessed the power of science to so radically reverse a popular misperception."

The recent negotiated settlement with the tobacco companies, now being considered by Congress, has put the industry on the defensive. Some antismoking legislators have expressed concern that the industry's future profits may be in jeopardy, thus imperiling the settlement's requirement that the companies pay anti-tobacco lawyers and state governments more

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than $500 billion over the next twenty years. With that concern in mind, Vice President Albert Bore has proposed that the domestic price of a pack of cigarettes be quadrupled, which, it is acknowledged, would pose no deterrent to the affluent but, in the words of Representative Comstock, "would punish the poor for their filthy habit."

The proposed legislation would also secure the interests of lawyers and state politicians by providing trade incentives for the marketing of cigarettes abroad. "There are more than five billion suckers out there," noted Vice President Bore, "and, fortunately, American brands, thanks to our technological edge, are the smoke of choice." Prospects are especially bright in poor countries where life expectancy is not so high in any case. The Vice President also observed that their smoking is less a threat to the ecosystem than "the danger of their becoming rich and wasteful like the rest of us." I. M. Swindler, who receives $15 million per year as chairman of Lawyers for Social Justice, says his group strongly backs the proposed measures as "an eminently fair arrangement for all the parties who matter."

FT

WHILE WE'RE AT IT

■ So your school is looking for an assistant professor of medieval literature and you are an equal opportunity employer, provided the party is equally enthusiastic about your understanding of Dante's understanding of Beatrice. Good. But I must decline to run such items in this corner. That's why we started the "classified" section a while back. Rates are shockingly reasonable, exposure is vast, and you can find out more about placing your ad by contacting Richard Vaughan, Publishing Management Associates, 129 Phelps Avenue, Suite 312, Rockford, IL 61108; phone (815) 398-8569; fax (815) 398-8579 (e-mail: Ravaughan@aol.com).

■ Reviewing two new books on Johannes Brahms in the *New York Times,* James R. Oestreich writes: "In all biography, uncertainties, ambiguities, and mysteries abound. In the case of Brahms such problems are multiplied. The composer systematically destroyed not only his inferior works and the early traces of his published ones but also letters and other documents, all with the purpose of covering his own tracks and confining the historical record to whatever his finished music might have to say. Happily, these two books together give a pretty thorough picture of what escaped his vandal grasp." There you have it, the desire for privacy as vandalism. The obligation to live in the service of biographers. But then, what would biographers do if there were no secrets to ferret out? As his review evidences, Mr. Oestreich clearly does not destroy his inferior work, in the unlikely event that someone might be interested years from now.

■ Waiting for a flight in the Denver airport (the new and inconvenient one that requires a trip to take a trip), I picked up this brochure advertising "My Twinn Dolls & Accessories." It seems you can send in a picture of your child and they'll make a doll that is the spitting image of him or her. Very much like cloning. It says here: "My Twinn is a family-friendly company founded a few years ago to create products that help kids and families feel good about themselves and appreciate how special and unique they are. Our individualized dolls are designed to resemble children as young as three years old up to twelve. Many families with an older child have enjoyed a My Twinn doll made to resemble that child at a younger age." It possibly betrays something about me, but this seems all wrong and not a little ghoulish. Is it substantively different from having snapshots of the children? Yes, approximately the difference between a snapshot of Fido and having him stuffed when he dies. If you have a doll of yourself at age twelve, why not at twenty and thirty? You might set them around the living room, as in Thurber's classic cartoon with the fellow's first wife. I don't want to make a big deal out of My Twinn and the people who run it may be very nice, but if I had the time to think about it I'm sure there's something here importantly suggestive about the state of the culture. As it was, they called the flight before I hit on it.

■ The iconoclastic *Nicotine Theological Journal* is up to it again. This time essayist I. M. Free addresses what is allegedly a neglected aspect of the great subject of women in the church. It is time to reconsider, we are told, the traditional denial of prostitution as an honorable calling. The writer recognizes that there would appear to be scriptural teaching against this position, but suggests that appearances may be misleading. "Two kinds of texts have been used to oppose prostitution. First are the OT's warnings about harlotry. While these texts are numerous, they are not meant to be universal in their application. In OT times prostitutes were associated with pagan temples and pagan worship. The harlotry condemned in the OT is the harlotry that links sex to idolatry and false religion. Modern prostitution has nothing to do with idolatry and so is not condemned in these texts. The second set of texts that seems to condemn prostitution are those related to the seventh commandment, 'You shall not commit adultery.' Some of you will think that this text is crystal clear. But think again. Adultery is a violation of the spiritual-physical union of a marriage. But prostitution has nothing to do with spiritual unions.

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It is a purely physical relationship, and so it cannot affect the personal union of marriage. Moreover, many social scientists believe that prostitution has beneficial social consequences. Therefore we should recognize that prostitution is not condemned by the seventh commandment." In a vein reminiscent of the spirit of the recent pastoral letter from a committee of the Catholic bishops, "All Our Children," I. M. Free concludes: "So when your daughter comes to you with tears in her eyes and asks, 'Mom and Dad, why can't I be a prostitute?', don't be harsh, judgmental, or old-fashioned. Don't undermine her self-esteem. Don't stand against the work of the Spirit to break down oppression and to redeem another area of life. Encourage her to use all her gifts. Encourage her to pursue her calling." (Please, hold back on those letters. The essay is intended as a parody. I think.)

■ According to David Greenberg, Justin Watson is wrong in thinking that the Christian Coalition will be forced to choose between "restoration" and "recognition." Watson makes that argument in his new book, *The Christian Coalition: Dreams of Restoration, Demands for Recognition* (St. Martin's). "Recognition" is the goal of an abused minority seeking, as they say, a place at the table. "Restoration" is the goal of a Christian America that is, in Greenberg's terms, "a return to a golden era, before modernity." "Recognition," he writes, "presumes a diverse and tolerant society, and restoration seeks to replace it." Contra Watson, he thinks that the Christian Coalition tries to have it both ways. "It can rally its members through promises of a Christian renewal. And it can fend off mainstream criticism by assuming the posture of the persecuted. Pat Robertson and Ralph Reed have pulled it off because they genuinely believe both things at the same time." While allowing that they may be personally sincere, Greenberg implies that they are subjectively deluded and objectively deceptive. He ends up agreeing with Watson that the clear-headed and honest choice must be between recognition or restoration. But how can it help but be "both things at the same time"? One time-honored way to energize a constituency is to persuade them that they have been unfairly excluded and deserve a place at the table, which is recognition. Having achieved recognition, they are then in a position to contend for their dream, which is restoration. You cannot do the first and then the second in a neat time sequence. They must be done simultaneously, if the constituency is to be kept energized and if the very new and tenuous place at the table is to be secured. For the foreseeable future, I expect, it will be "both things at the same time." If or when the place at the table is unchallengeable, then attention may be entirely shifted from recognition to restoration. Of course, that assumes that those who have secured their part in the establishment will remember why they wanted to get there in the first place.

■ The story is told by the *Times* in a sniffily disparaging tone, but I'm not sure that's warranted. It is about how American historians are developing a new field called "counterfactual history." This turns on speculation about the "what ifs" of history. What if, when in 1889 Kaiser Wilhelm II volunteered for one of her stunts, Annie Oakley had shot the Kaiser instead of shooting the cigar out of his mouth? What if John Wilkes Booth had not shown up at Ford's Theater on time? And so forth. Maybe the *Times* is just worried about counterfactual historians infringing upon its style of journalism. But for the moment I'm on the side of the historians. What they are doing lifts up the contingent and personal nature of history, and is a refreshing change from the grand schemes of sundry determinists who labor to explain the systematic causes and impersonal dynamics that supposedly hold humanity in their thrall.

■ Scientism is "the world's littlest religion," according to the title of a noteworthy article by Huston Smith, the famous scholar of world religions, writing in *Touchstone*. It is little not in its influence but in that it makes little whatever it touches. Theology, Smith believes, is well situated to expose the reductionist assumptions that underlie the religion of scientism. To illustrate his point Smith offers what he calls an expanded syllogism: a) Science is our sacral mode of knowing. b) The crux of science is the controlled experiment. c) We can control only what is inferior to us. d) Conclusion: science discloses only our inferiors, from which God is excluded by definition. Smith's argument is not novel, but the point is nicely put. He writes, "To mount a controlled experiment of the sort that gives science authority to speak, one must know what the relevant variables are; and if grander beings than us exist—angels? God?—their variables elude us in the way those relating to human consciousness elude the sniff tests of dogs. Our superiors, if they exist, dance circles around us, not we them." Among more thoughtful people, says Smith, scientism is losing its hold, and that has given rise to varieties of postmodernism. For complicated reasons, however, postmodernism cannot provide the belief systems that human beings need in order to be human. Theology "is the custodian of the wisdom traditions of mankind," and it is irreplaceable. Because of the differences among world religions, some object to the use of "theology" in the singular, but, Smith writes, "I find a common conceptual spine underlying them all: the Great Chain of Being." According to Smith: "There is an alternate reality to the one we normally experience and expand through science. It is momentously better, more powerful, and more real than our quotidian world, and the chief reason the mainline churches are losing ground is that scientism and the

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academy have loosened their grips on it, leaving them with no clear alternative to the liberal intellectual ethos of our day. They continue to use the word 'God,' but what is the cash value of that word when it is injected into a world that is basically vectored by Darwin, Marx, Nietzsche, Freud, and the Big Bang?" The essential truth is that the world described by scientism "is too small for the human spirit." One need not be an uncritical disciple of Karl Barth to protest Smith's lumping the Christian revelation into a world religions category such as that of the Great Chain of Being. But his essay renders a valuable service in succinctly demonstrating the conceptual move toward an opening to the transcendent that exposes the littleness, and implausibility, of the scientism to which so many—also so many Christian intellectuals—are still in thrall.

■ Whether the death toll was 100 million, which is probable, or a "mere" ten million, which is implausible, is not the issue that threw French intellectuals into turmoil at the publication of *The Black Book of Communism*. Some persist in saying of Marxism that the ideas were right but the people were wrong. That, says Anne Applebaum, a columnist for the *Sunday Telegraph* of London who is writing a book about the Soviet gulag, simply will not do. "In order to understand this, there is no need to compare Communist crimes with Nazi crimes. It is pointless to argue over which philosophy, communism or fascism, is 'worse.' Both are evil; both should be condemned; those who perpetrated either should be punished; those who sympathized with either should be ashamed." Why are there still apologists for Marxism? Applebaum answers: "Partly this attachment to a philosophy that has been responsible for eighty years of terror is explained by the outcome of World War II: We in the West still cannot admit to ourselves that we defeated one murderous regime with the help of another. Partly it is a form of Western naiveté: History still has not taught us to distinguish between truth and propaganda. The Nazis committed acts of terror and were open about it, more or less. Communists committed acts of terror in the name of the greater good, which is why such a substantial minority of people can still be offended by a book that sets out to condemn Marxist regimes. But whatever the reasons, our inability to condemn left-wing acts of terror as forcefully as right-wing acts of terror does leave open a continued source of moral confusion in the West, one that will no doubt continue to erupt in uneasy and unresolved public debates such as the one that has just played itself out in Paris. Until Marxism itself is widely seen as an abhorrent philosophy, so it will remain."

■ In preparation for the great Jubilee of the year 2000, John Paul II has called for a "purification of memory," also with respect to Christian responsibility for anti-Judaism and anti-Semitism. Throughout his pontificate, he has reached out to Jews in unprecedented ways, yet his remarks at a symposium on these questions last October have been criticized by some as convoluted and inadequate. The Pope said then: "Indeed, in the Christian world—I'm not saying on the part of the Church as such—erroneous and unjust interpretations of the New Testament relative to the Jewish people and their presumed guilt circulated for too long, engendering sentiments of hostility toward this people. That contributed to a lulling of many consciences, so that—when Europe was swept by the wave of persecutions inspired by a pagan anti-Semitism that in its essence was equally anti-Christian—alongside those Christians who did everything to save those who were persecuted, even to the point of risking their own lives, the spiritual resistance of many was not what humanity expected of Christ's disciples." The criticism that this falls short of a confession that *the Church* has sinned fails to understand Catholic ecclesiology, which holds that, while members of the Church are sinners, the Church herself is sinless, as exemplified by the Blessed Virgin, the icon of the Church. John Paul went on to underscore the unique and unbreakable connection between the Jewish people and the Christian understanding of salvation: "At the origin of this little people—situated between great pagan empires whose blaring culture was overpowering—is the act of divine election. This people is assembled and led by Yahweh, creator of heaven and of earth. Its existence is therefore not purely a fact of nature or of culture in the sense that the resourcefulness proper to one's nature is expressed in culture. It is a supernatural fact. This people perseveres despite everything because it is the people of the covenant, and despite human infidelities, Yahweh is faithful to his covenant. To ignore this most basic principle is to adopt a Marcionism against which the Church immediately and vigorously reacted, conscious of a vital link with the Old Testament, without which the New Testament itself is emptied of meaning. The Scriptures are inseparable from the people and their history which leads to Christ, the promised and awaited Messiah, Son of God made man. The Church does not cease to confess this, daily taking up in its liturgy the psalms, as well as the canticles of Zechariah, the Virgin Mary, and Simeon (cf. Psalm 132:17; Luke 1:46-55; 1:68-79; 2:29-32)." Those who say that Jesus being a Jew is no more than a contingent cultural circumstance—as though the Lord might have been born in another tradition without losing his identity—"not only misunderstand the meaning of the history of salvation but, more radically, do damage to the very truth of the incarnation and make an authentic conception of inculturation impossible." Therefore, it is not simply a matter of politeness or even of justice but the very heart of the gospel story that mandates the

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conclusion "that anti-Semitism is without any justification and is absolutely condemnable."

■ Goodness knows, Martin Luther has critics aplenty, but his theological circumstance is not so desperate as to reduce him to the defenders he is getting these days. There are, for instance, some officials of the Southern Baptist Convention and now *Liberty* magazine, published by the Seventh-day Adventist Church (SDA), presenting themselves as paladins of Luther and his understanding of "justification by faith." This in their reaction against the statement "The Gift of Salvation," sponsored by the initiative known as Evangelicals and Catholics Together (ECT). The Catholics who signed "Gift" cannot agree with evangelicals on Luther's doctrine of justification, it is said, because they also hold to baptismal regeneration and the need for the sacraments. Which would seem to mean that Luther could not agree with Luther on justification, because he was equally uncompromising on both scores. It is piquant when those in the Baptist tradition, whom Luther condemned as "godless enthusiasts," set themselves up as the guardians of orthodoxy according to Luther, but it is downright risible in the case of Seventh-day Adventists. The SDA, which has somewhat under a million members in this country, dates from the early-nineteenth-century Millerite enthusiasm for predicting the return of Christ and teaches that Christians must abstain from, inter alia, "unclean flesh foods" and alcoholic beverages. Luther, presiding over a grand pork loin with beer in hand, called such people legalists, enemies of the gospel, false prophets, and other things unprintable. In its slash-and-burn attack on "The Gift of Salvation," *Liberty* asks, "If we are saved by faith alone, what's the purpose of *sacramental* grace? And even more important, why does one need a church to administer that grace?" Dare I suggest that the answers are readily available in the writings of Luther? But it is sadly obvious that the editor of *Liberty* is not interested in answers. Criticizing the position of Edward Cardinal Cassidy published in these pages, the editor leaves no doubt that he thinks "Catholics and Protestants don't believe in the same gospel after all," and therefore, in Latin America and elsewhere, Protestants should continue to proselytize active Catholics. In a world of four billion non-Christians, Protestants of a sectarian bent believe that the easiest religious pickings are among Catholics. Sheep-stealing (*Liberty* calls it that) is the name of their game, and they are not about to let theological truth get in their way. That is very sad, but one can understand it. I do wish they would leave Luther out of it, however. (For a very different evaluation of "The Gift of Salvation," please see the letter in this issue by three evangelical participants in ECT.)

■ I haven't really been keeping count over these thirty years, but it seems like the zillionth poll on the subject. The highly respected Wirthlin organization reports that 57 percent of Americans say that abortion should not be permitted except in cases of rape or incest or to save the mother's life. With a margin of error of 3.09 percent (not 3.1 percent, mind you), 1,002 adults (not a mere one thousand) were asked to choose from six options. Eleven percent would prohibit all abortions; 14 percent would permit it only to save the mother's life; 32 percent would allow the three exceptions above. Another way of putting it is that 25 percent of Americans would prohibit abortion, since instances in which abortion is the only alternative to the mother's dying are practically nonexistent. The Wirthlin poll is yet another indication that the tide continues to turn against abortion and toward law that is protective of the unborn child.

■ We've told the story before. One evening Jean Garton, co-founder of Lutherans for Life, was preparing some slides she was going to use in a presentation the next day. On the screen was a dismembered victim of abortion. Suddenly her three-year-old son, who she thought was safely in bed, was standing behind her and asking with infinite sadness, "Who broke the baby?" Garton's little book, *Who Broke the Baby?*, has become something of a classic in pro-life circles and is now out in a new edition from Bethany House Publishers (Minneapolis). It is one of the most accessible introductions to the basic arguments in the abortion controversy. You might want to pick up a copy, and maybe another for a friend who still doesn't understand.

■ Rocket scientist Eugene Shoemaker always wanted to fly to the moon, but he died in a car crash last year. So NASA's unmanned Lunar Prospector, which is programmed to crash on the moon, carries one ounce of Shoemaker's cremated ashes. Navajo Nation President Albert Hale protests that it is "a gross insensitivity to the beliefs of many Native Americans to place human remains on the moon." The moon, he said, "is a sacred place in the religious beliefs of many Native Americans." Said a NASA spokesman, "Almost regardless of what you do, you're going to step on toes somewhere." Maybe so, but on the moon? On the other hand, last year some Indian activists wanted Manhattan back. Better give them the moon.

■ The flood of material that it seems the whole world aims at this desk never lets up. The easier things get done more or less immediately, and that includes lighter comments in this section. Then there are the weightier matters—articles, books, manuscripts—that will require some serious time, and they keep getting put off. Such a matter is "Thinking on One's Own: Catholicism in the

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American Intellectual Imagination, 1928-1960," an article in the June 1997 issue of the *Journal of American History* by Harvard's John T. McGreevy. I was going to do something major with it, but now it has been overtaken by other claimants on editorial attention. Suffice it to say that it is a masterful review and analysis of anti-Catholicism among American intellectuals, and how that prejudice was attached to 1) a devotion to democracy, 2) the assumption that democracy requires people to be disposed to "thinking on one's own," 3) the claim that the Catholic Church is the sworn enemy of that disposition, and 4) the conclusion that the Catholic Church is the enemy of democracy. McGreevy's conclusion is that today's intellectual ambivalence about the autonomous individual is working to the benefit of Catholicism in America. "An emphasis on individual rights, in this view, can occur at the expense of the more prosaic politics of compromise and institution building. Some philosophers extend this point to argue that moral traditions mark the beginning of genuine discussion, not simply a roadblock to thinking on one's own. The cumulative effect of this fascination with intellectual and social 'community' changes lingering apprehension about the threat posed to social cohesion by Catholic schools and churches into admiration." The conclusion that communitarianism, as it is called, is good for the Catholic Church (and other "thick" communities) is hardly surprising, but I expect readers might be surprised by the article's careful documentation of the near-unanimity among the country's earlier intellectual and cultural elite about Catholicism as the enemy of democracy. Of course, McGreevy could have gone back long before 1928 and demonstrated the same factor at work in the nineteenth-century promotion of the public school movement, a story persuasively told in Charles Glenn's *The Myth of the Common School.* (So there's one less item on the stack of weightier matters.)

■ Forget all those gripes about higher education giving religion short shrift. At City College of the City University of New York, African Heritage Month offered "A Global Perspective" in the form of a lecture by Professor James Small of the political science department titled "Voodoo as the Basis of All Western Religions." The lecture is sponsored by the Pepsi Bottling Co. The educational and business leaders of the country are, I suspect, in for a very long shrift, a.k.a. purgatory.

■ So what is at issue in the letter sent by Elliott Abrams, Michael Horowitz, David Dalin, and other Jewish opinion leaders in which they protest the long-running film on the origins of anti-Semitism shown at the Holocaust Museum in Washington? The key points are nicely summarized in the newsletter of the National Association of Evangelicals: "By sins of omission more often than sins of commission, the film is said to repeat and propagate four libels of Christianity: (1) The film begins with and proceeds at great length to describe anti-Semitic acts and doctrines propounded in the name of Christianity by various Popes and by Martin Luther; in so doing it takes the clear position that anti-Semitism originated with Christianity and flourished as a result of its influence. (2) The film acknowledges that culturally based, anti-Semitic discrimination occurred during the Enlightenment period but fails to note how the Enlightenment also led to modern-day racial theories of anti-Semitism that left Jews no escape from its reach. (3) The film's direct treatment of Hitler's anti-Semitism is particularly gratuitous and offensive, i.e. 'The only difference between me and the Church is that I am finishing the job.' (4) The film's closing frame—announcing a 1994 rejection of Luther's anti-Semitic writings by the Lutheran Church in America—serves its thesis in appropriate ways, such as to leave its critical last word in emphatic service of the thesis that Christianity was the principal if not singular cause of anti-Semitism, indeed of the Holocaust itself." Leon Wieseltier of *The New Republic* notwithstanding, the appropriate word for this is libel. It is also lousy history that undermines the mission of the Holocaust Museum.

■ Here's a nastily somber turn on the life-is-unfair theme. Reviewing a new biography of Albert Camus, Christopher Caldwell comes to this conclusion: "One would think that those whose views were vindicated in the conflict would see their reputations rise, but the calculus is more complicated than that. Consider George Orwell: Does anyone believe *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *Animal Farm* will be read at all once they cannot be read as ideological romans à clef? Something similar is happening to Camus. His reputation cannot stand on a fictional output of one novel, two novellas, and a handful of stories. His journalism rarely rose above the run of the mill, and his plays are *bad.* His brilliant essays will continue to attract readers, particularly *The Rebel.* But his image is destined to fade along with the ideologies to which he was an antidote. People will remember Camus as a hero of the Cold War—a brave critic of mid-century malaise and violence and intellectual corruption. In short, a writer who is owed part of the credit for the fact that we no longer need him." I rather hope that Caldwell is wrong, but am reluctant to go back and reread *The Plague* lest I discover he is right.

■ The aptly named Michael Self is drama instructor at the mostly female Annie Wright School in Tacoma, Washington, and this year produced *Jesus Christ Superstar* with an all-girl cast. Self says that Matthew Fox, former priest and "creation spirituality" guru, inspired him with the illumination that the feminine and the environment are "sacred parts of the nature of God." Letting the

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girls play apostles, said Self, gives them a chance "to experience the opportunity of what it's like to be in a position of power, influence, and leadership." As the Superstar said, the first shall be first.

■ So this junior at Winslow High School in Arizona brought to English class the cremated remains of her mother to show a friend. When she opened the box, some ashes fell on the floor, which set off a panic among many of the eight hundred students, more than half of whom are Navajos or Hopis. These tribes have very definite taboos about anything having to do with dead bodies, and more than a hundred students boycotted classes. Principal John Henling brought in a Navajo medicine man to conduct ceremonies removing evil spirits from the classroom, but it turns out he was not certified as a really traditional medicine man, so Henling had to get two others, one Hopi and one Navajo, to do additional ceremonies. The unidentified student was not disciplined, said Henling, "because we have a lot of things in our student handbook but we never thought about putting anything in about what happens to those who bring human remains." The Rev. Jack Miller of the evangelical Potter's House Church, however, threatened to sue the school district unless he was given equal time to conduct ceremonies cleansing the classroom of the effect of the pagan rituals employed by the medicine men. "We try to satisfy the cultural and religious needs of our community," said Dale Patton, attorney for the school district. "If they want to come in and do something roughly comparable to what was done by the other group, I don't have any problem with that." Ah, pluralism.

■ Much discussed in Catholic circles is Ann Carey's *Sisters in Crisis*, published by Our Sunday Visitor. It is a carefully documented and devastating chronicle of what happened in many orders of women religious and their association, the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR). In his column that appears in diocesan papers, George Weigel recommended the book, and that drew the wrath of some sisters connected with LCWR who demanded equal time for an answer. Among the more interesting answers is one in the Boston *Pilot*, written by a sister who directs the Pauline Center for Media Studies. "Personally, I was fascinated by Carey's fastidious avoidance of the terms 'liberal' and 'conservative.' Instead she opts for 'traditional' (referring to sisters who belong to the Conference of Major Superiors of Women Religious) and 'change-oriented' (for those who belong to LCWR)." One might think that Carey should be commended for avoiding the usual liberal/conservative polarization, but no. "So," we are told, "she sets up a smoke-screen dichotomy using her own terms, a dualism she carries through from start to finish." You prefer the dualism of liberal and conservative? And wasn't the Conference of Major Superiors set up explicitly as an alternative to LCWR in order to encourage a more traditional approach to the religious life? And doesn't LCWR explicitly, repeatedly, and insistently describe itself as change-oriented? Most puzzling in the sister's attack, however, is this: "The careful reader of *Sisters in Crisis* can only ask, So what? Tell me something I don't know or that really matters." Carey makes the argument that LCWR used duplicitous means in the service of dubious theologies to hijack major religious orders that have as a consequence suffered precipitous declines in membership and mission and are, in many cases, on the edge of going out of existence. And the response to this is, "So what? Tell me something I don't know or that really matters." Let me join Weigel in recommending Ann Carey's *Sisters in Crisis*, and in the hope that somebody will come up with a more coherent response to it.

■ "It is our victory and we are proud of it," announced the Catholic League when ABC finally terminated its program *Nothing Sacred*. The League claims credit for having driven away from the show thirty-seven sponsors, but acknowledged that the main reason for the program's failure is that not many people wanted to watch "a depressing show about a dissident priest in a dysfunctional parish." The television industry and the general media waged a perhaps unprecedented campaign to save the failing show, keeping it on the air much longer than any other program with comparably dismal ratings. While the "creative community" in the industry chalks up the cancellation to another victory for the Philistines, one hopes there are others in ABC and elsewhere who understand that there is a big market for programming on religious themes that is not handicapped by a ham-fisted ideological agenda. Meanwhile, the Catholic League should be permitted its moment to crow.

■ *Ad multos annos* to Martin E. Marty who reached his 70th a while back. Appropriately enough, Norman Lear of Hollywood and Bill Moyers of PBS threw the birthday bash for him in Chicago. Marty said in an interview that he has made it a rule not to take sides on questions such as abortion where people are not likely to change their minds in any case. There is one issue, however, on which he has emphatically taken sides over the years: He very much dislikes John Paul II and his putative effort to roll back "the spirit" of Vatican II. Father Thomas Reese, S.J., shares his animus toward the present pope, and Margaret Hebblethwaite shares it in spades. Marty reviews Hebblethwaite reviewing Reese, all deploring a Vatican that is the enemy of democracy: "It is a strange little world of its own, even if its tentacles reach out to embrace the globe." Tentacles yet. Lear, Moyers, Reese, Hebblethwaite, Marty. A pity that John Paul II is not part of that really big world.

■ Dr. Benjamin Spock has died at age ninety-four. A

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good many Americans of a conservative disposition blamed him and his child-rearing counsel for producing a "Spock-marked" generation that brought the country to moral rack and ruin. I don't know about that, but I do remember Ben Spock as a friend from my leftist days in the 1960s. In my late twenties I was on the national board of SANE, then a prominent citizens organization for a "sane nuclear policy," of which Ben was chairman. The group was started by the late Norman Cousins, editor of *Saturday Review*, and after a while there developed a deep split between the Spock and Cousins factions. The dispute was over an exclusionary rule that prohibited Communist Party members from being members of SANE. Spock didn't believe there were any real Communists and, even if there were a few, the idea that they posed a serious threat was a Joe McCarthy fantasy. I am sorry to say that I in my naiveté supported the Spock faction. I liked Ben. It was hard not to like him. He was a gentleman WASP whose three-piece pin-striped suits perfectly bespoke his confidence in a secure moral world of taken-for-granted decencies. I recall long discussions about religion and child-rearing in which he opined that on the subject of religion children should be left to themselves until "they are old enough to make up their own minds." To my objection that this is tantamount to a clear parental statement that religion is not very important, he allowed that that is probably the case, but so what? The important thing is to bring up a decent and healthy person, and then, for those who choose the option, religion might be fitted in somehow to "satisfy the spiritual dimension." Later, Ben was hanging out with the likes of Abbie Hoffman and others who were deep into the psychedelic counterculture. He was more amused than alarmed by that world, since he assumed that, for all the radical posturing, it was just a matter of kids being kids, even if some of them were a little old for such carryings on. On theories about baby care I am no expert, but I think Ben's alleged "permissiveness" simply reflected his belief that human beings are fundamentally good and, if you don't repress and inhibit them, everything will turn out more or less okay. I am sorry to say that Ben treated his first wife shabbily, but deep down I don't think he thought he or anyone else—at least anyone else in *his* world—was really capable of evil. In this he was a little like Professor Henry Higgins, puzzled about why other people could not be like him. Ben Spock was a morally smug and superficial man. Despite that, and maybe because of that, he possessed the charm of an earlier generation's certitude about what it meant to be a gentleman. On many of the really big questions he was dead wrong, but, all in all, he meant well. Others may if they wish invoke the maxim that the road to hell is paved with good intentions. As for myself: *Requiescat in pace.*

■ When setting out to trash an institution, the trashing can be made to seem more credible if the trasher professes his allegiance to it. Thus Garry Wills in "The Vatican Monarchy" excoriates what he calls "papal-Marian imperialism" while declaring his devotion to Mary and very boldly, right up front, without any equivocation, acknowledging that he is "a Papist" although "not necessarily a papalist." Writing in the *New York Review of Books,* he is ostensibly reviewing seven recent books on Catholicism, including Eamon Duffy's very impressive *Saints and Sinners: A History of the Popes.* But he gives scant attention to the weightier tomes, perhaps because of space limitations when you have, after all, only six small-print newspaper-sized pages, and perhaps simply because he got carried away with the more sensational and salacious items. The first page and a half is taken up with a book about the 1858 separation of a young boy in Bologna from his Jewish parents because the boy had been baptized and it was a law at the time that Christians should not be reared by Jews. Mr. Wills leaves absolutely no doubt that he condemns what happened as a Bad Thing. He has clearly given this a great deal of thought and has concluded that such a law is simply wrong. This is but one evidence of his superiority to the pope who was party to that sensational "kidnapping." Pius IX was a very bad pope, as Wills demonstrates in the course of another page describing his "monomaniacal" determination to have himself declared infallible in order to gratify his own ego. Most of the rest of the essay is an exploitation of Michael Cuneo's interesting book, *The Smoke of Satan,* to show, heh, heh, how really weird those conservative Catholics are. As further evidence of "papal-Marian imperialism," Wills cites Kenneth Woodward's sensationalism in *Newsweek* about a new Marian definition, while the fact that conservatives are no more than "resisters to change" is demonstrated by the fact that converts such as Father Richard John Neuhaus "adopted the Church because it was a still point in flux," which comes as a great surprise to Richard John Neuhaus. It is no surprise that Mr. Wills does not like John Paul II at all, and he invokes as an authoritative judgment on the present pope John Henry Newman's opinion, occasioned by the pontificate of Pius IX, that it is not a good idea for popes to stay in office for twenty years. "The Vatican Monarchy" reflects the bitter disappointment of those who pinned their hopes on Vatican II producing a revolution that was not to be. The disappointment is understandable. The more unseemly aspect of the essay, however, is Mr. Wills' stunningly simplistic and supercilious claims to know why people did what they did and do what they do. And it does, I am afraid, smack of the smarmy to declare one's devotion to a Church that one is holding up to public ridicule and contempt. If the reader did not know better, he might take the essay as

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an invitation to admire Garry Wills for sticking with an institution clearly unworthy of the allegiance of a man so decent and intelligent as he.

■ I am grateful that alert readers send clippings from newspapers or magazines that they think might be deserving of comment. I would be even more grateful if you took care to include the exact source and date of publication. That's why we have the "Sources" box at the end of this editorial rollick. Without it you can be sure that historians of a more sensible generation would suspect that we were just making up the end of the twentieth century.

■ Excruciatingly correct. That's Senator Joseph Biden of Delaware, who on a CNN talk show opined that attacking Iraq might "embolden Islam to become more aggressive with the United States." Oops. In no time our friends at the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) were all over his case. Mr. Biden promptly issued a most abject policy. That is not at all what he meant to say. Rather, "Islam is one of the world's great religions. It stands for peace, tolerance, and justice and it is responsible for many enlightening advances in human thought and practice over the centuries. Islam is an integral part of the American fabric. Six million American Muslims contribute to our society in every walk of life." For good measure, he takes a swipe at Samuel Huntington: "I also reject the notion of a 'clash of civilizations.'" That's a good boy, Joe.

■ The world of evangelical Protestant theology, suggests Roger Olson of Bethel College and Seminary in Minnesota, is divided between backward-looking "traditionalists" and forward-looking "reformists." His call for dialogue within an evangelicalism of "flexible borders" and "strengthened center" does sound for all the world like wearily familiar nostrums for splitting the differences in order to keep the peace. Flexibility, civility, intellectual curiosity, and other good things much to be desired must be convincingly grounded in devotion to the truth rather than aversion to unpleasantness. Otherwise "dialogue" is simply a synonym for letting liberalism have its way. The estimable Timothy George of Beeson Divinity School in Alabama has other problems with Olson's analysis: "What I find most missing in Roger Olson's analysis of evangelical theology is this note of passion. He depicts the contemporary landscape as a kind of range war between the settlers and the explorers. As in the old Zane Grey novels, of course, there is a little drama: fences to mend, turf to protect, a gunslinger on the loose, and maybe a shootout at the OK Corral. But for what? Where is the sense that anything of ultimate importance is at stake in these squabbles? Who is willing to die for a postmodern paradigm? When Harvey Cox was a student minister in Berlin in 1962, one year after the erection of the Wall, he was able to travel back and forth between East and West because he held an American passport. He thus became a courier for pastors and Christian laypeople on both sides of that divide and was sometimes able to smuggle theological books into the East. What the people wanted most were copies of Barth's *Church Dogmatics*. 'To carry in something by Bultmann would have been a wasted risk,' Cox said. 'Let the bourgeois preachers in West Germany agonize about the disappearance of the three-decker universe and existentialism. We had weightier matters to confront.' That is a parable for us today. A theology more enamored with novelty than fidelity is not worth smuggling, for it will not nourish the mission of the church nor build up the people of God." That, of course, was the Harvey Cox prior to his *Secular City* of 1965 which so excited the bourgeois preachers of America. But George's test is a good one. Of any theological argument or proposal one might ask: Is this worth smuggling? And at what price?

■ I have wondered in this space why it is that very progressive Catholics have in recent years been marching under the banner "We Are Church." What happened to the definite article? Peter Reilly of West Palm Beach writes to suggest that the slogan was coined by former Soviet agents under deep cover. The giveaway, he says, is that Russian has no definite article. An improbable theory, it seems to me. Much more plausible is the rumor that "We Are Church" is a traditionalist Catholic plot to bring further discredit upon their liberal opponents. Latin also has no definite article.

■ Mary Ann Glendon of Harvard Law School (HLS) sends me a clipping from the *Harvard Law Record* with her notation, "Stop the presses!" The headline in the clipping is "Poll Shows HLS More Liberal than America." The poll of 306 students has a lot about sex (about 68 percent say they masturbate and 75 percent favor "gay marriage"). Asked who is their favorite Garden of Eden character (Eve, Adam, Snake, God), less than 5 percent name God, although close to 60 percent say they believe in God. Somewhat fewer believe in an afterlife, and 50 percent say they are not afraid of death. A bare majority thinks "In God We Trust" belongs on the dollar bill, and about 80 percent answer no to the question, "Is your faith more valid than others?" A more accurate headline might be, "Poll Shows HLS as Confused as Most Americans."

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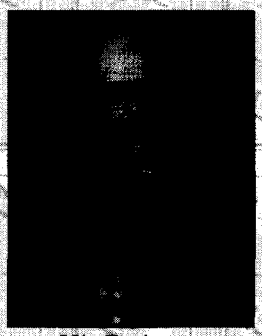

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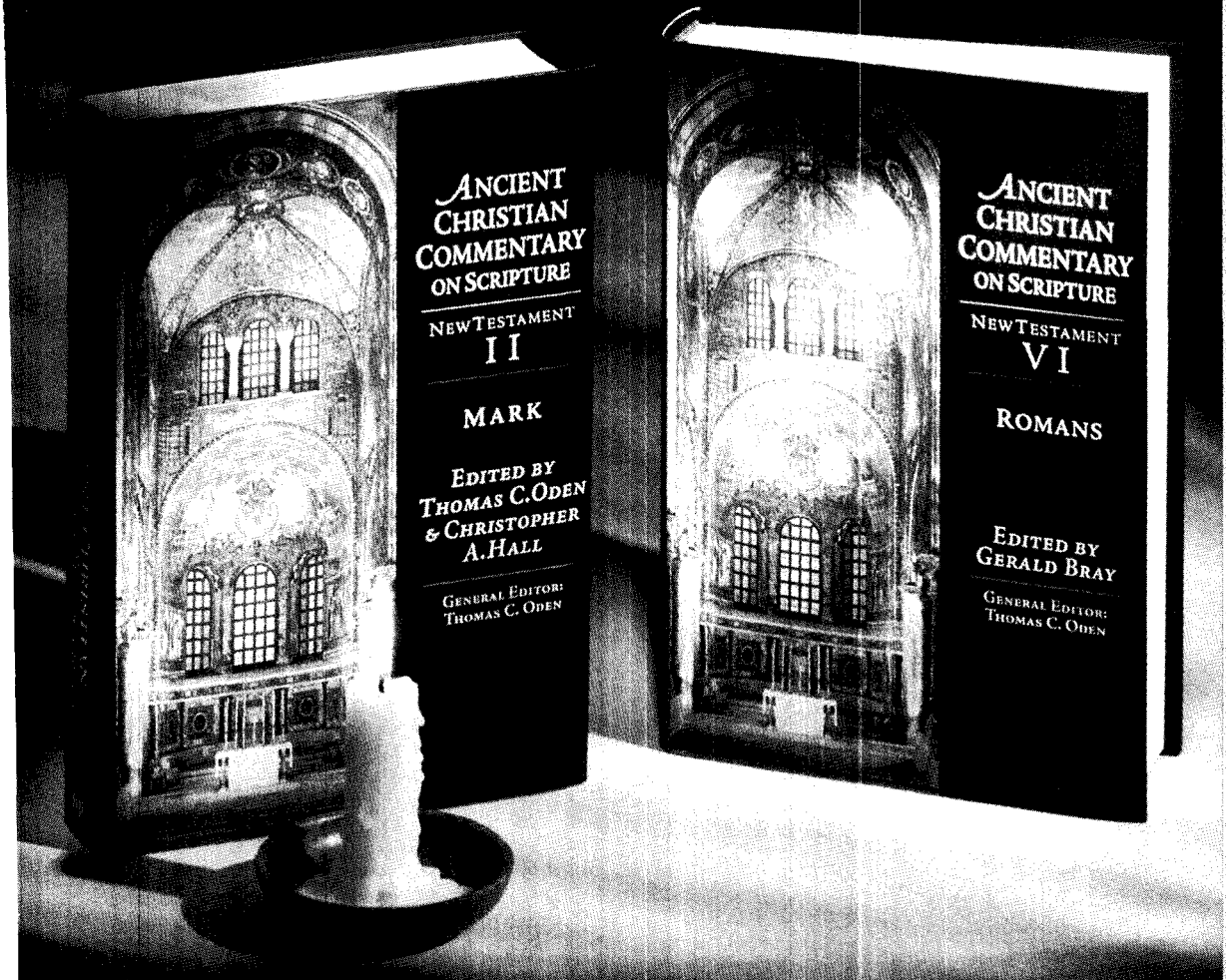
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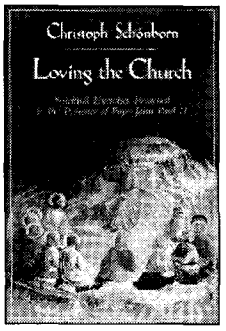

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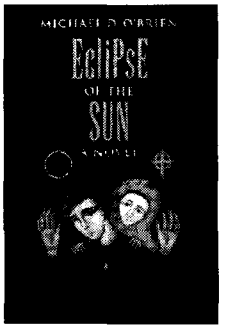

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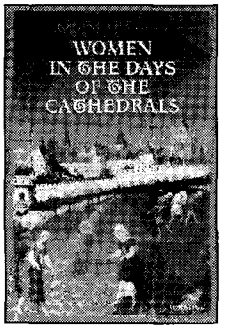

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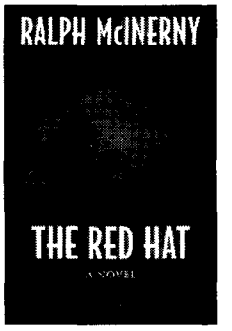

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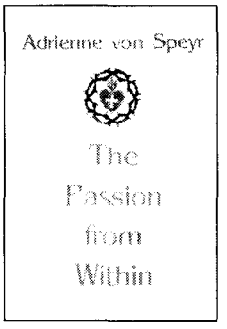

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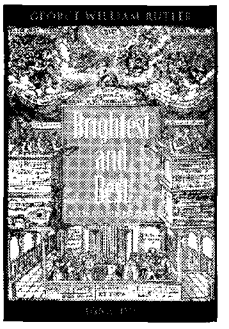

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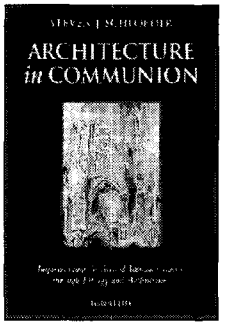

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